



# THE PERFECT STORM

## Travel Bans Set as Blizzard Slams Northeast

Snow falls in Times Square in New York, Jan. 26, 2015. As residents in the Northeast braced for a blizzard set to sweep across the region, states announced travel bans and the suspension or reduction of public transit, thousands of flights were grounded, and officials urged people to leave work early before heavy snow and high winds would make travel treacherous.

(Michael Appleton/The New York Times)



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# Obama makes the most of India's Republic Day Parade

ELLEN BARRY

PETER BAKER

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**NEW DELHI** - India's military forces marched past President Barack Obama and India's president and prime minister in great waves of color Monday.

Chinese. Even Pakistan has been invited. Obama's acceptance of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's invitation this year was seen here as a great tribute to India, a sign of the country's arrival on the world stage.

"The crowd is getting un-

Obama's Cadillac pulled up. At that point, a military policeman in a red-fringed turban gestured sternly for spectators to remain seated, but they ignored him completely, scrambling atop their chairs for a view. Two men unfolded a

outdoors in public in a foreign country during his six years in office. As is typical for outdoor events, he was seated behind bulletproof glass shields. Indian security was so tight that ballpoint pens were confiscated from reporters covering the parade.

Republic Day is a major holiday in India, commemorating the day in 1950 when the post-partition democratic Constitution came into force. Seats are provided for 125,000 people, according to the Defense Ministry, which arranges the event. Spectators began streaming through the streets toward the parade ground at dawn, some wrapped in wool blankets against the chilly rain. Although elaborate, snaking barriers had been erected along the routes leading to the site, the crowds quickly spilled over them and surged into the road.

"I came because of Obama," said Vinay Kumar, 32, who had woken at 4:30 a.m. to catch a bus from his home on the city's outskirts. "We hope he and Modi together will help

Many said they came out of pride. Indian crowds adore military spectacle, a fact that British colonial powers recognized in the 19th century, adopting the fabulous displays of the maharajahs who preceded them. George Curzon, the British viceroy, at one point "issued instructions that European officials were not outshined by the Indian princes who came wearing their jewelry," said Rana Chhina, who heads the Center for Armed Forces Military History in New Delhi.

"The colonial state was of the view that the Indian people loved a parade, loved pageantry, and they wanted to give it to them," he said. "Pomp, pageantry, all of this - they are symbols of power."

For all his socialist leanings, India's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, retained those flourishes when he introduced the Republic Day parade, in addition to a display of heavy weaponry directed toward Pakistan. As members of a Sikh regiment passed Monday, swinging their arms so vigorously that they seemed in danger of dislocating them, the announcer remarked in a tweedy British accent that "this regiment has the reputation of creating terror among the enemy."

Monday's parade included all-women contingents from the army, navy and air force. Obama seemed particularly impressed by a display of motorcycle trick-riding, showing a thumbs-up. There were also many reminders that India has been the world's largest consumer of Russia's arms industry, particularly after a series of flyovers by MIG-29 and Su-30 fighter jets.

Obama and the U.S. delegation have made it clear they want to compete for India's defense dollars, renewing the defense pact between the two countries Sunday and agreeing to cooperate on aircraft carrier and jet engine technology. They also agreed to work on joint production of small-scale surveillance drones. □



**President Barack Obama and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi watch a parade and award ceremony during India's Republic Day celebration in New Delhi, Jan. 26, 2015. Obama's decision to accept the invitation to be chief guest during the celebration has been seen here as a great tribute to India, heralded by politicians and the news media as a sign of the country's importance on the world stage.**

(Stephen Crowley/The New York Times)

Crimson-clad border troops with identical mustaches, astride camels decked out in gold braid and multicolored pompoms. A bagpipe and drum corps in scotch plaid and leopard skin. Sikh regiments in dress turbans, their starched fringes fanning out like gold lamé pie plates. A formation of combat helicopters that thudded past, releasing drifts of marigold petals.

On one level, of course, it was just a parade. But it served as a fitting geopolitical metaphor as well. Russian-made Sukhoi-30 fighter jets roared over, so low that the scent of jet fuel settled over the VIP section, and Russian T-90 tanks trundled by, a reminder of India's ties to Moscow dating to the Cold War.

Yet it was Obama in the seat of the chief guest, the first U.S. leader to do so. In the 65 previous parades, the chief guest has twice been Soviet, once Russian, twice Yugoslav, three times French, twice British, once



**Soldiers during India's Republic Day parade in New Delhi, Jan. 26, 2015. The parade was the visual centerpiece of President Barack Obama's three-day trip to India, a colorful melange of modern-day military hardware, soldiers in traditional turbans and costumes riding camels, and a series of floats from myriad states capturing different aspects of India's rich and complicated cultures.**

(Stephen Crowley/The New York Times)

derstandably excited and ecstatic at the arrival of the motorcade of the president of the United States, Barack Obama," the parade announcer said when

banner that read "I [heart] Obama."

Obama's presence required extensive security preparations, as he has not spent such a long stretch

grow the economy. And help us to get H-1B visas to visit America."

"I am not looking for a permanent visit," he added, "just one year or two."





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# Travel bans set as blizzard slams Northeast

**MARC SANTORA**

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**NEW YORK** - As millions of residents in the Northeast prepared for a powerful blizzard bearing down on the region, bringing with it near hurricane-force winds along the coast and as much as 3 feet of snow, officials from New Jersey to Maine urged people to get off the roads and stay indoors.

Even before the worst of the storm hit, thousands of flights were grounded, public transportation was suspended or curtailed and travel bans were put in place in the half dozen states in the path of the storm. Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo of New York announced Monday that all subway and bus service in New York City was to stop at 11 p.m. Monday.

Many buses and trains were packed Monday afternoon as officials urged people to leave work early, before heavy snow and high winds made travel treacherous or impossible. "This will most likely be one of the largest blizzards in



**Passengers step out into the snow as they exit the No. 1 train in New York, Jan. 26, 2015. As residents in the Northeast braced for a blizzard set to sweep across the region, states announced travel bans and the suspension or reduction of public transit, thousands of flights were grounded, and officials urged people to leave work early before heavy snow and high winds would make travel treacherous.**

(Karsten Moran/The New York Times)

the history of New York City," Mayor Bill de Blasio warned Monday.

The latest forecasts called for as much as 2 feet of snow to fall in the city by Tuesday morning, with accumulation in some areas

even higher depending on where the heaviest storm bands settle.

De Blasio took the unusual step of ordering all drivers off the streets by 11 p.m. Monday, a ban that he said covered "anything that has to do with leisure or convenience," including, to the chagrin of many housebound New Yorkers, food delivery.

The call to completely clear the city's streets was a reflection of how seriously public officials were taking the threat of the storm, which was expected to affect a 250-mile stretch of the Northeast.

Across the region, governors declared states of emergency, deployed National Guard units and readied fleets of snow plows and salt trucks.

Coastal areas including eastern Long Island, Cape Cod and other parts of New England, were expected to be battered by winds that

could blow nearly as high as a hurricane, leading to possible flooding and widespread power failures that might last for days.

The public seemed to heed the warnings, crowding the aisles of grocery stores and stocking up on supplies at home goods stores.

Given that cars being stranded on roads and highways has proved to be a problem during recent storms, state leaders all had a common message: get off the roads as soon as possible.

Cuomo ordered a travel ban on Long Island starting at 11 p.m. Monday and said that more travel bans could be put in place depending on the path of the storm.

"Mother Nature has decided once again to come visit us in an extreme way," he said. "This is going to be a blizzard. It is a serious blizzard. It should not be taken lightly."

Airlines pre-emptively canceled 5,200 flights as of Monday morning and some airlines announced that they would be suspending all service in the region Tuesday.

"This is a top-five historic storm, and we should treat it as such," said Gov. Charlie Baker of Massachusetts. "This is clearly going to be a really big deal."

It is also the first storm Baker is facing since he was sworn in this month and, like other politicians, he is keenly aware that he will be judged on the state's response.

Baker ordered a statewide travel ban in effect as of midnight Monday and the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, which operates the Boston subway system and commuter rail lines, will shut down service at midnight Monday and will be closed Tuesday. In Boston, Mayor Martin J. Walsh also ordered drivers off the street Monday evening and said residents would be notified via loudspeaker that a parking ban will go into effect at 6 p.m. "You should not be driving in the city of Boston," the mayor said. De Blasio said that the decision to order all drivers off the roads in New York City was necessary to ensure that sanitation workers can clear streets and emergency workers can get where they need to go. He said the order extended to those making food deliveries on bicycles.

"People have to make smart decisions from this point on," de Blasio said. "It is not business as usual."

In southern New England, officials braced for as much as 3 feet of snow and high winds that could cause widespread power failures. □

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# Drone crashes at White House; hobbyist says it's his

JOSH LEDERMAN

JOAN LOWY

Associated Press

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — A two-foot-long (half meter) drone apparently flown by a hobbyist crashed on the White House grounds Monday in an extraordinary, if unintended, breach that raised fresh questions about the president's security — and a growing threat from the sky.

A man later came forward to say he was responsible for the mishap in the middle of the night and hadn't meant to fly the drone over the complex, officials said. "Initial indications are that this incident occurred as a result of recreational use of the device," said Secret Service spokesman Brian Leary.

President Barack Obama and his wife, Michelle, were overseas when the quadcopter struck the southeast side of the grounds at about 3 a.m. Daughters Sasha and Malia stayed behind in Washington; it was not known whether they were at the mansion. Officials believed the intrusion to be the first of its

kind on the White House grounds, although not the first in the vicinity.

Low-flying drones like the quadcopter — a device lifted by four propellers —

It was not immediately clear that the Secret Service could have done anything to prevent Monday's incident. Yet the episode joins a string of recent

tives were reassigned this month, and former Director Julia Pierson was forced to resign last year after a Texas man armed with a knife was able to get

after that September incident, and the disclosure of a previously unreported security breach, recommended hiring a new director from outside.

That report was the second critical review of the agency responsible for protecting the president. In November, the Homeland Security Department, which oversees the Secret Service, released an internal investigation about the fence-scaling incident that found poor training and staffing and a series of missteps led to the breach.

Police, fire and other emergency vehicles swarmed the White House just after the crash, with several clustered near the southeast entrance to the grounds. The White House was dark and the entire perimeter was on lockdown until around 5 a.m. when those who work there were allowed inside.

The breach was bound to reinvigorate a long-running public debate about the use of commercial drones in U.S. skies — as well concerns about White House security. □



Secret Service officers search the south grounds of the White House in Washington, Monday, Jan. 26, 2015. A two-foot-long (half meter) drone apparently flown by a hobbyist crashed on the White House grounds Monday in an extraordinary, if unintended, breach that raised fresh questions about the president's security — and a growing threat from the sky.

(AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

have become increasingly sophisticated and affordable instruments that authorities worry could also become tools for terrorists or others meaning to do harm.

security breaches at the White House that have fueled questions about the agency's effectiveness and ability to protect the president.

Four high-ranking execu-

over a White House fence and run into the executive mansion before being subdued.

An independent panel that investigated the agency's leadership and practices



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# US deficit to shrink to lowest level of Obama presidency

**STEPHEN OHLEMACHER**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Solid economic growth will help the U.S. budget deficit shrink this year to its lowest level since President Barack Obama took office, according to congressional estimates released Monday. The Congressional Budget Office says the deficit will be \$468 billion for the budget year that ends in September. That's slightly less than last year's \$483 billion deficit. As a share of the economy, CBO says this year's deficit will be slightly below the historical average of the past 50 years. The budget agency also says the number of U.S. residents without health insurance will drop substantially — from 42 million last year to 36 million this year — largely because of Obama's health

law. These numbers don't include people who are in the U.S. illegally, who are ineligible for subsidies under the health law.

In a report released Monday, CBO projects solid economic growth for the next few years. The official scorekeeper of Congress also expects unemployment to drop slightly.

"In CBO's estimation, increases in consumer spending, business investment and residential investment will drive the economic expansion this year and over the next few years," the report said. CBO also cited wage increases, rising wealth and the recent decline in oil prices.

For future years however, CBO issued a warning: Beyond 2018, deficits will start rising again as more baby



**Congressional Budget Office Director Douglas W. Elmendorf pauses in a corridor of the Ford House Office Building on Capitol Hill in Washington, Monday, Jan. 26, 2015, before a briefing for reporters on the CBO's updated budget and economic outlook. The president's budget will be released next Monday.** (AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite)

boomers retire and enroll in Social Security and Medicare. By 2025, annual budget deficits could once again top \$1 trillion, unless Congress acts.

At that point, government

pension benefits would account for one-quarter of all federal spending, said CBO Director Douglas Elmendorf. "The underlying point is that we have a handful of very large federal programs that

provide benefits to older Americans," Elmendorf said. "And with the rising number of older Americans and a rising cost of health care, those programs get much more expensive." □

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## Rate Hikes:

# Low inflation likely to keep Fed 'patient'

**MARTIN CRUTSINGER**

**AP Economics Writer**

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The Federal Reserve ended 2014 with a pledge to be "patient" in raising interest rates from record lows. The way things are going, its patience may endure for a long while.

Though the U.S. economy has steadily improved, inflation has dipped further below the Fed's target rate. Chalk it up to plunging oil prices and a surging dollar, which makes foreign goods cheaper in the United States.

Complicating the Fed's timetable is the European Central Bank's just-announced plan to pump 1 trillion-plus euros into its ail-

ing economy. That flood of cash should keep the eurozone's rates ultra-low. Many investors may respond by shifting into higher-yielding U.S. Treasuries. That would strengthen the dollar even more and could push U.S. inflation further below the Fed's 2 percent target.

Under that scenario, the Fed might find it hard to justify a rate hike, which risks weakening the economy and slowing inflation further. As the Fed meets this week, some economists who had predicted a rate increase by June now think September might be more realistic.

"The Fed has every reason to continue to be patient,"

said David Wyss, an economics professor at Brown University. "Standing pat is the best thing to do right now."

In a statement it will issue when its meeting ends Wednesday, the Fed is expected to repeat phrasing it introduced in December: That it "can be patient" in starting to raise its key short-term rate, which the Fed has held near zero since December 2008.


Even before the ECB acted last week, anticipation of its move had helped cut the euro's value to a decade-long low against the U.S. dollar. The dollar is also being driven up by strengthening U.S. economic growth. □



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## Survey: US firms optimistic on hiring, wages in 1Q



Shoppers are reflected in a store's window as they walk through Chicago's Loop, in Chicago. Rising sales helped boost hiring at U.S. businesses in the last three months of 2014, and companies are optimistic that continued improvement in business conditions will bring increased employment and wages in the current quarter, a new survey shows.  
(AP Photo/Charles Rex Arbogast)

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Rising sales helped boost hiring at U.S. businesses in the last three months of 2014, and companies are optimistic that continued improvement in business conditions will bring increased employment and wages in the current quarter, a new survey shows.

And many businesses expect the steep drop in oil prices in recent months to have a positive impact on them this year, according to the survey released Monday by the National Association for Business Economics.

Fifty-four percent of the 93 respondents to the quarterly survey said sales at their companies increased in the October-December period. That was up from 49 percent in the third quarter. As sales picked up, so did hiring. Thirty-four percent of companies responding said they hired more workers during the fourth quarter, about the same as in the second and third quarters.

Businesses said the outlook for the January-March period is strong. Fifty-one percent of respondents said they expect wages and salaries to increase at their companies — up

sharply from 34 percent in the fourth-quarter survey. Thirty-six percent said they expect their companies to hire more workers, up from 31 percent previously.

Finance, insurance and real estate companies were most likely to say they expect employment increases, at 52 percent; transportation, utilities and communications firms were the least likely, at 15 percent. Only 7 percent of respondents expect employment declines at their companies in the first quarter.

"Business conditions continued to improve in the fourth quarter of 2014," NABE President John Silvia, the chief economist for Wells Fargo Securities, said in a statement. "There are strong expectations for the first quarter, especially for jobs and wages. ... Moreover, price and cost pressures appear to be subdued."

There was a sharp decline in the number of companies reporting they raised prices in the October-December period, to 16 percent from 25 percent in both the second and third quarters. Higher prices were reported most frequently by respondents from the transportation,

utilities and communications sector, at 25 percent. Nearly two-thirds of respondents — 65 percent — expect no change in the prices their companies will charge in the first quarter, close to 66 percent in the fourth-quarter survey.

The drop in oil prices was the financial shocker of 2014. In the first half of the year, the oil market looked just as it had the year before — and the two years

before that. Crude oil was more than \$100 a barrel and drivers in the U.S. were paying around \$3.50 a gallon for gasoline. Now oil is around \$45 a barrel and the average gas price is \$2.07 a gallon.

Fifty-seven percent of respondents in the NABE survey indicated that tumbling oil prices would be positive to some extent for their businesses this year, while only 18 percent said

they could have a negative impact. The decline is expected to benefit the manufacturing sector to a larger extent than others.

The survey, in this case conducted between Dec. 15 and Jan. 8, is intended to gauge business conditions at NABE members' companies or industries. Forty-three percent of the respondents were from companies with more than 1,000 employees. □



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## American Living:

# US milk industry fights back against 'anti-dairy folks'



Grocery and dairy assistant Reyna DeLoge stocks dairy products that only use milk from pasture-raised cows, at Vitamin Cottage Natural Grocers, in Denver. As Americans continue turning away from milk, an industry group is pushing back at its critics with a social media campaign trumpeting the benefits of milk.

(AP Photo/Brennan Linsley)

**CANDICE CHOI**  
**AP Food Industry Writer**

**NEW YORK (AP)** — As Americans continue turning away from milk, a dairy industry group is pushing back at its critics with a social media campaign trumpeting its benefits.

The association says it needs to act because attitudes about milk are deteriorating more rapidly, with vegan groups, non-dairy competitors and other perceived enemies getting louder online.

Julia Kadison, CEO of Milk Processor Education Program, which represents milk companies, says the breaking point came last year when the British Medical Journal published a study suggesting drinking lots of milk could lead to earlier deaths and higher incidents of fractures. Even though the study urged a cautious interpretation of its findings, it prompted a wave of posts online about the dangers of drinking milk.

"I said, 'That's enough.' We can't have these headlines that 'Milk Can Kill You' and not stand up for the truth," Kadison said in a phone interview.

On Tuesday, the "Get Real" social media campaign will be announced at a dairy industry gathering in Boca Raton, Florida in conjunction with the National Dairy Council and Dairy Management Inc., which represent dairy farmers. The campaign is intended to drown out milk's detractors with positive posts about the nutritional benefits of milk on Facebook, Twitter and elsewhere. Milk brands, their employees and others in the industry will post the messages and

direct people to a website where they can get more information.

Online ads will also tout the superiority of dairy milk over almond milk, which is surging in popularity.

The campaign comes as milk's dominance in American homes continues to wane as beverage options proliferate.

According to data from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, people drank an average of 14.5 gallons (55 liters) of milk a year in 2012. That's down 33 percent from the 21.8 gallons (82.5 liters) a year in 1970.

One factor chipping away at milk's dominance is the growth of non-dairy alternatives.

While soy milk's popularity has faded, retail sales for almond milk are estimated to be up 39 percent last year, according to Virginia Lee, a packaged food analyst with market researcher Euromonitor International.

Meanwhile, the USDA recommends adults get three cups of dairy a day, including options like fat-free, low-fat milk or calcium-fortified soy milk.

And the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics, which represents nutrition professionals, is supporting the Get Real campaign and its push to underscore "the decades of research reinforcing low-fat milk as one of the most nutrient-rich beverages available."

But milk's wholesome image is nevertheless being muddled by diet trends and divergent attitudes about nutrition. Many who follow the popular Paleo diet, for instance, shun dairy because people didn't drink it during the Stone Age. □



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## Greece's first radical left prime minister sworn in

NICHOLAS PAPHITIS  
Associated Press

**ATHENS, Greece (AP)** — Tieless and eschewing the traditional religious swearing-in ceremony, but with a surprise coalition deal in the bag and a sanguine international reception, radical left leader Alexis Tsipras took over Monday as austerity-wracked Greece's new prime minister. Hours earlier, the 40-year-old's Syriza party trounced the outgoing, conservative government in Sunday's national elections, on a platform of easing social pain and securing massive debt forgiveness. Although Syriza fell tantalizingly short of a governing majority in the 300-seat parliament, Tsipras moved quickly Monday to secure the support of 13 lawmakers from the small, right-wing populist Independent Greeks party, raising his to-



Greece's Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras leaves Presidential Palace after taking a secular oath in Athens, Monday, Jan. 26, 2015. Radical left leader Alexis Tsipras has been sworn in as Greece's new prime minister, becoming the youngest man to hold the post in 150 years.

(AP Photo/Lefferis Pitarakis)

tal to 162.

"We have the required majority," Tsipras told Greek President Karolos Papoulias, shortly before be-

ing sworn in as prime minister, the youngest Greece has seen in 150 years and the first incumbent to take a secular oath rather than

the religious one customarily administered by a Greek Orthodox official. Initial reactions from international markets and offi-

cials from Greece's bailout creditors were markedly unflustered.

"We stand ready to continue supporting Greece, and look forward to discussions with the new government," International Monetary Fund director Christine Lagarde said.

Jeroen Dijsselbloem, the Dutchman who chairs eurozone finance ministers' meetings, said that even though "there is very little support for debt write-offs," there is room to "come back to debt sustainability issues" in the future—if necessary.

His views were echoed by the prime minister of Finland, a country that has long been among the most unmovable on austerity issues. Alexander Stubb said that even if he opposes forgiving Greece's debts outright, he would be prepared to discuss extending loan repayments. □



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## Russia defiant after more threats from West over Ukraine

**MOSCOW (AP)** — A defiant President Vladimir Putin on Monday called the Ukrainian army a "NATO foreign legion," reflecting his readiness to stand up to the West regardless of rising economic costs, as Standard & Poor's rating agency downgraded Russia's credit rating to junk. While the Russian ruble tumbled further on the news of the downgrade, Putin's spokesman shrugged off the Western threat of more sanctions as "short-sighted." The Kremlin's uncompromising stance is rooted in its desire to prevent Ukraine from ever joining NATO by se-



Russian President Vladimir Putin speaks during a cabinet meeting at the Novo-Ogaryovo residence outside Moscow, Russia, Monday, Jan. 26, 2015. The meeting focused on the government's anti-crisis plan.

(AP Photo/Alexei Nikolsky)

curing a broad autonomy for the rebellious provinces in the east. To avoid being called a party to the conflict, as Ukraine and the West see it, Russia is pushing the Ukrainian government to speak directly to the rebels.

The latest rebel offensive, which involved the deadly shelling of a strategic port city of Mariupol over the weekend, appeared aimed at pressuring Kiev into such talks.

Speaking to students in St. Petersburg, Putin said the Ukrainian leadership was to blame for the upsurge in violence and accused it of using civilians as "cannon fodder" in the conflict.

"(Ukraine's army) is not even an army, it's a foreign legion, in this case a NATO foreign legion," Putin said, adding that it's serving the goal of "the geopolitical containment of Russia, which absolutely don't coincide with the national interests of the Ukrainian people."

NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg dismissed the claim and accused Russia of sending large numbers of heavy weapons to the rebels. "We have seen a substantial increase in the flow of equipment from Russia to the separatists in Ukraine," he said.

A Russian envoy at the 57-nation Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe rejected those claims, arguing that the rebels are using old Soviet-era weapons they seized from the Ukrainian arsenals. Andrey Kelin, who spoke after the OSCE called a special session on the uptick in fighting, said the

rebels are using "very old Soviet equipment" dating back to the mid-1960s.

Ever since the separatist rebellion in eastern Ukraine flared up in April following Moscow's annexation of Crimea, Russia has denied Western accusations that it has backed the insurgents with troops and weapons. But even though Ukrainian troops and the rebels use the same types of Soviet-built arms, the sheer number of heavy weapons in the rebels' possession has been seen in the West as a proof of Moscow's involvement in the conflict.

From the onset of the conflict, which has claimed more than 5,100 since April, Russia urged the Ukrainian authorities to offer broad powers to the east and provide amnesty to the rebels. A cease-fire deal signed in September by representatives of the government and the insurgents included some of those provisions along with a pledge to withdraw foreign fighters and place OSCE monitors on the Russian-Ukrainian border, but it has been violated by both parties and fighting has continued.

A lull in fighting in December raised hopes for a peaceful settlement, but hostilities escalated again in recent weeks as the rebels launched a series of new offensives.

Russia blamed the renewed fighting on the Ukrainian side, saying it has tried to settle the conflict by force. "They used a peace break exclusively to regroup their forces, and they started it all over again," Putin said. □



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# Kurds celebrate ousting Islamic State fighters from Kobani

**ZEINA KARAM**  
**Associated Press**

**BEIRUT (AP)** — Jubilant Kurdish fighters ousted Islamic State militants from the key Syrian border town of Kobani on Monday after a four-month battle — a significant victory for both the Kurds and the U.S.-led coalition.

The Kurds raised their flag on a hill that once flew the Islamic State group's black banner. On Kobani's war-ravaged streets, gunmen fired in the air in celebration, male and female fighters embraced, and troops danced in their baggy uniforms.

The failure to capture Kobani was a major blow to the extremists whose hopes for an easy victory dissolved into a costly siege

under withering airstrikes by coalition forces and an assault by the Kurdish militia.

For the U.S. and its partners, Kobani became a strategic prize, especially after they increased the number of airstrikes against IS fighters there in October.

"Daesh gambled on Kobani and lost," said senior Kurdish official Idriss Nassan, using the Arabic acronym for the Islamic State group.

"Their defenses have collapsed and its fighters have fled," he told The Associated Press from Turkey, adding that he would return to Kobani on Tuesday.

Kobani-based journalis Farshad Shami said the few civilians who remained had joined in the celebration. Most of the town of about 60,000 people had fled to

Turkey to escape the fighting.

Several U.S. officials said they couldn't confirm

that Kurdish fighters have gained full control of Kobani, but added that they have no reason to disbe-

lieve the claims.

A senior U.S. official said the Kurds controlled most of the town and have consolidated control particularly in the central and southern areas. The official said Islamic State militants still have a considerable presence in outlying areas around Kobani and are still putting up stiff resistance to the Kurds in those pockets outside it.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said fighters of the main Kurdish militia known as the People's Protection Units, or YPG, were searching houses in the eastern suburbs of the town and dismantling and detonating bombs and booby-traps left behind.



Smoke rises from the Syrian city of Kobani, following an airstrike by the U.S.-led coalition, seen from a hilltop outside Suruc, on the Turkey-Syria border. Jubilant Kurdish fighters ousted Islamic State militants from the key Syrian border town of Kobani on Monday after a four-month battle — a significant victory for both the Kurds and the U.S.-led coalition.

(AP Photo/Vadim Ghirda)





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## Spain: 10 dead, 19 hurt in crash of F-16 jet at base

**JORGE SAINZ**  
**Associated Press**

**MADRID (AP)** — A Greek F-16 fighter jet crashed into other aircraft on the ground during NATO training in southeastern Spain Monday, killing at least 10 people, Spain's Defense Ministry said. Another 19 people were injured in the incident at

the Los Llanos base, which sent flames and a plume of black smoke billowing into the air, the ministry said in a statement. Five with severe burns were transported to a Madrid hospital for treatment and the rest were undergoing treatment in the city of Albacete near the base, the statement said.

Most victims were not believed to be Spaniards but military personnel from other NATO member countries participating in the program, according to a Defense Ministry official who spoke on condition of anonymity because of ministry rules preventing him from being named. Nine of the injured were

Italians taking part in the training course, the Italian defense ministry said in a statement. Seven suffered slight injuries but the conditions of two were still being assessed. The French Defense Ministry confirmed that at least one person from France was among those killed in the crash, and five others

from the country were seriously injured. French Defense Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian will head to the scene Tuesday. Based on initial reports, there were no U.S. personnel killed but an unknown number were treated for minor injuries, said Air Force Lt. Col. Vanessa Hillman, a Pentagon spokeswoman. □

## Aer Lingus confirms IAG takeover bid at 2.55 euros per share

**S. POGATCHNIK**  
**Associated Press**

**DUBLIN (AP)** — Aer Lingus announced Monday that British Airways parent IAG has made an improved takeover offer of 2.55 euros (\$2.85) per share, and the board of the Irish airline says it is considering the proposal. The offer — the third by IAG in the past month — values Aer Lingus at more than 1.3 billion euros (\$1.45 billion). Unlike previous offers, the Aer Lingus board did not reject this offer outright. Instead, Aer Lingus said acceptance of IAG's all-cash offer would require "irrevocable commitments" from the two biggest shareholders: rival budget carrier Ryanair and the Irish government. Ryanair has a nearly 30-percent stake, the government 25 percent. Monday's published offer is



A flock of sheep stand in a field as two Aer Lingus jets taxi and take off at Dublin Airport, Ireland. (AP Photo/Shawn Pogatchnik)

higher than the figure of 2.50 euros per share that airline officials circulated to British and Irish media over the weekend. It includes payment of an extra 5 cent dividend per share. IAG, which was formed in 2009 by a merger between British Airways and Spanish carrier Iberia, is led by Willie Walsh, the Irishman who was chief executive of Aer Lingus from 2001 to 2005. It long has been considered a logical suitor for Aer Lingus following the failure of three hostile takeover bids by Dublin competitor Ryanair. Walsh opened IAG's bidding last month with a 2.30 euros-per-share offer, and raised it to 2.40 euros. The move coincided with the imminent departure of Aer Lingus chief executive Christoph Mueller, who is taking the same position at troubled Malaysia Airlines. □

## S&P downgrades Russia credit rating to junk

**LONDON (AP)** — Standard & Poor's rating agency on Monday downgraded Russia's credit grade by one notch to junk status, citing a weakened economic outlook. The agency dropped the rating to BB+ from BBB- as it sees the country's financial buffers at risk amid a slide in the country's currency and weakening revenue from oil exports.

"In our view, the Russian Federation's monetary policy flexibility has weakened, as have its economic growth prospects," it said. Russia's economy has been hit hard by the double impact of weaker prices for its energy exports as well as Western sanctions. The Russian currency tumbled on the downgrade, dropping some 7 percent

to about 68.5 rubles to the dollar. Standard & Poor's said that Russia's financial system is weakening, limiting room for maneuver for Russia's Central Bank. It said the bank "faces increasingly difficult monetary policy decisions," while also trying to preserve incentives for growth. The Russian economy is expected to contract by 4 to

5 percent this year for the first time since President Vladimir Putin took the helm in 2000. Capital outflows, which averaged \$57 billion annually during 2009 to 2013, soared to \$152 billion last year. "Stresses could mount for Russian corporations and banks that have foreign currency debt service requirements without a concomitant foreign currency

revenue stream," the rating agency said. Russia's Finance Minister Anton Siluanov sought to play down the anticipated move, saying it reflected the rating agency's "excessive pessimism." He emphasized the Russian economy's strong fundamentals, such as high level of hard currency reserves, trade surplus and low level of state debt. □





## Festivities and Celebrations Mark 'Dia di Betico' Weekend



**ORANJESTAD** - Many happenings took place all over the island this weekend in celebration of 'Dia di Betico,' like games, car shows, BBQ's, musical events and more! As you can see on the pictures, Camacuri Harley Davidson club did it their way: a fully stocked bar and delicious food for sale, all for a good cause. Camacuri Harley Davidson club is famous for their fund-raising in order to help the needy during the year. Many other bikers passed by to enjoy the good vibes that started early in the morning and lasted till late. Of course the well-known bike rides took place. A sight to see! □





# Aruba Resorts Host Colorful Carnival Festivities and Elections!



**NOORD** - In colorful Queen Elections and Coronations, resorts across Aruba elect their Carnival royalty from among fun-loving island guests and employees.

At one recent event, Margy Irizarry from Brooklyn NY, Josefina Monsato, from New Jersey, Barb Craighthead, from Chicago, Maureen Mini, and Hali Internicola, both from Boston, were presented as queen candidates dancing their way into the crowd's heart at one recent event. The best dancer and most joyful of the four, Hali Internicola, won this particular contest amid lots of cheers!

The contest was presided by famous local Carnival-lovers including Nancy

Brete of Aruba Kayak Adventure, and Gerla Chayadi who escorts the famed bar hopping bus, Kukoo Kunuku. They were joined on the jury by Ana Wanga from Madeleine's Spa, and Harold Pasch, owner, Sweet Peppers Restaurant. Emceed by Farley Croes, the energetic activities coordinator, the crowd consisting of resort guests and the candidates, including three additional cross-dressing candidates from among the resort male guests, had a great time! The winner received a crown and a sash, and nicely wrapped gifts including a flower arrangement and a bottle of champagne. Activities



Coordinator Mislady Fingal contributed greatly by coaching the candidates, and providing them with dance lessons, speech preparation and creative make-up, hair and costume requirements. Island guests and 2014 Carnival Queen Lori Martazzo, joined Astrid Muller, Gina Tondy, Daisy Gomez, Franklin Olive, Cristina Galindo and Mary Werleman for a Carnival themed Manager's Cocktail Party, enjoyed by all. □





## **ALHYDRAN, a highly recommended medical moisture-regulating gel-cream in burn clinics worldwide, now locally available.**

Tourists and locals love Aruba Aloe's skin care and sun care products, but what most people don't know is that Aruba Aloe also produces a highly concentrated moisture-regulating gel-cream called *Alhydran*, which is used for the aftercare treatment of burn scars, surgical wounds, redness, itching, rashes after laser therapy or radiotherapy, and other scar tissue. This very effective cream has become one of the new standards in scar treatment in university hospitals and burn clinics worldwide. Sold in over 22 countries, this unique Aruban export product is now locally available in all Aruba Aloe stores and on [www.arubaaloe.com](http://www.arubaaloe.com).

### **A success story**

Wim Arns, a middle-aged Dutch man, got severely burned on his hands and face when cigar ashes drifted down into a bucket of paraffin oil he was holding, causing a spontaneous explosion. Wim: "After being treated in the Burn Centre in Rotterdam, the doctors referred me to a skin therapist in my hometown to continue the aftercare of the burn scars. My skin felt really tight and itchy, and I wanted a cream to help with this. That's when the therapist recommended *Alhydran*. Already within an hour of applying the cream, I felt my skin had more space to breathe and the itching stopped. My face has healed completely, the skin has total flexibility again, and the same goes for my hands. Therapy certainly contributed to this, but I attribute the flexibility of the skin and eradication of the itching to the use of *Alhydran*."

### **Alhydran through the eyes of a professional**

Rina Rijkenberg is a certified skin therapist in Oosterbeek, the Netherlands. As a specialist, she has different skin products to choose from, but *Alhydran* is her #1 solution. Rina: "A lot of complaints are that the skin feels dry, itchy, red, sensitive, and painful, which are symptoms frequently associated with burn victims, lymph edema patients, and people who have undergone radiation therapy or have general scar tissue, acne, or excessive hair. All this can be caused by a deregulation in the moisture levels of the skin. The secret to *Alhydran* is that it regulates the moisture levels of the skin continuously in an unprecedented way. A very high dosage of pure Aloe Vera gel delivers the hydration, and pure Vitamin C, Vitamin E, and Jojoba oil prolong the activity. Patients can actually see and feel their skin healing."

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- Aruba Aloe Renaissance
- Aruba Aloe La Cabana
- Aruba Aloe Paseo Herencia (Shopping mall)
- Aruba Aloe Alhambra
- Aruba Aloe Arawak (Palm beach)
- Aruba Aloe Cruise Terminal (APA Cruise Terminal)

- Aruba Aloe Divi Links (Divi Aruba Hotel)
- Aruba Aloe Tamarijn (Tamarijn Aruba Hotel)
- Aruba Aloe Occidental (Occidental Hotel)
- Aruba Aloe Marriott Ocean Club
- Aruba Aloe Riu Palace Antillas
- Aruba Aloe Main Street
- Aruba Aloe at The Village (In front of Radisson Resort)



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Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant watches from the bench during the first half of an NBA basketball game against the Miami Heat in Los Angeles, Tuesday, Jan. 13, 2015.

Associated Press

## Kobe Bryant to have shoulder surgery, likely out for season

GREG BEACHAM  
AP Sports Writer

**EL SEGUNDO, California (AP)** — Kobe Bryant will have surgery Wednesday on his torn right rotator cuff, likely ending his 19th season with the Los Angeles Lakers.

The team announced Bryant's surgery Monday. He injured his shoulder last week in New Orleans.

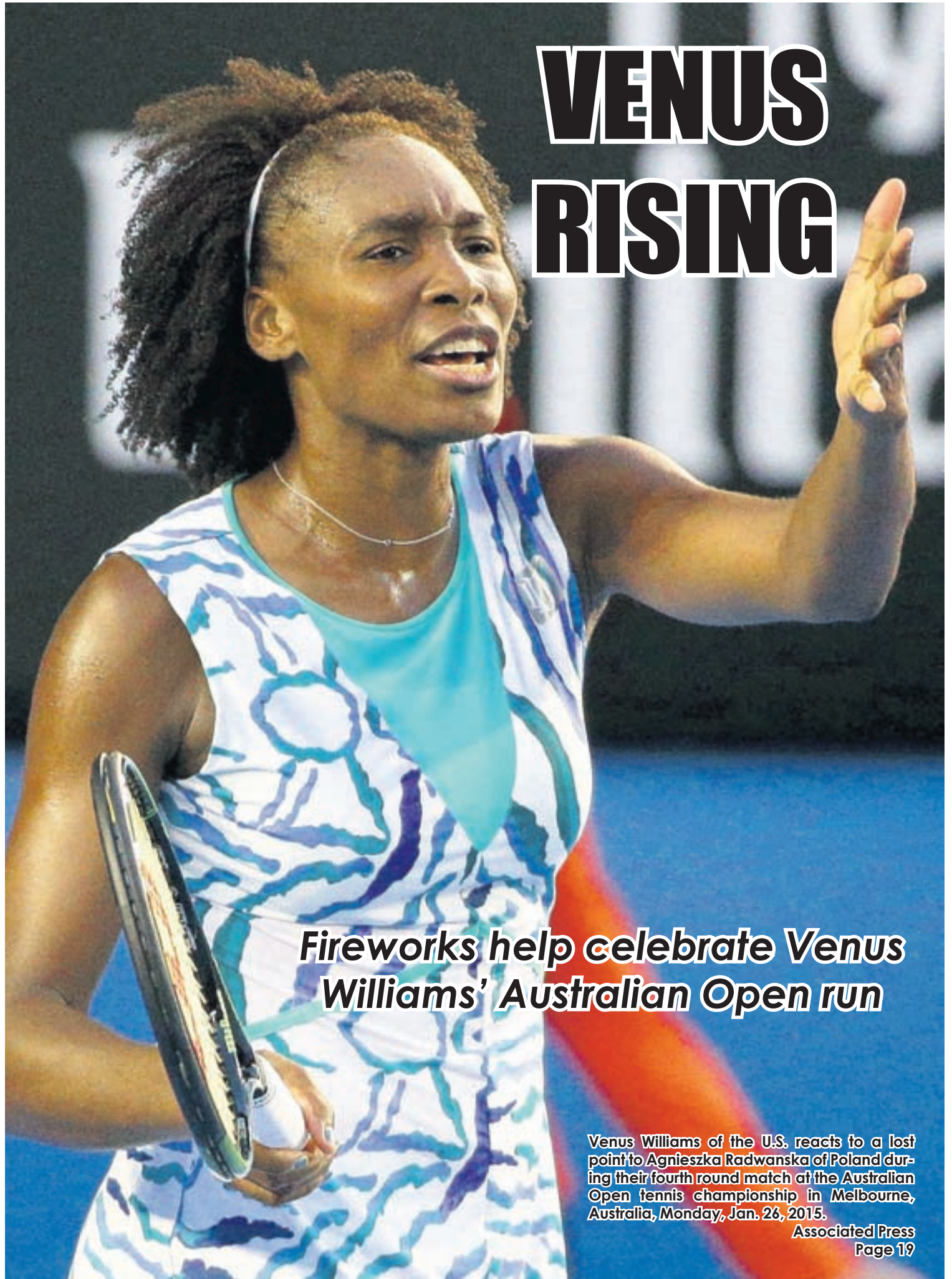
The Lakers will announce a timetable for Bryant's recovery after surgery, but coach Byron Scott anticipates losing the third-leading scorer in NBA history for the rest of the year.

"Kobe is probably not going to play" again this season, Scott said.

"We all know how tough he is," Scott added after Monday's practice. "He's a trooper, so we pray for him that his return will be sooner rather than later."

Bryant's torn rotator cuff is likely his third straight season-ending injury. He missed the 2013 playoffs with a torn Achilles tendon, and he played just six games last season before breaking a bone near his left knee.

Continued on Page 20



## VENUS RISING

**Fireworks help celebrate Venus Williams' Australian Open run**

Venus Williams of the U.S. reacts to a lost point to Agnieszka Radwanska of Poland during their fourth round match at the Australian Open tennis championship in Melbourne, Australia, Monday, Jan. 26, 2015.

Associated Press  
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# Bill Haas escapes trouble to win Humana Challenge

**JOHN NICHOLSON**

**AP Sports Writer**

**LA QUINTA, Calif. (AP) —**

Bill Haas pulled off another imaginative escape to win the Humana Challenge.

"I think of myself as more of a painter and not a mechanic," Haas said.

Far less dramatic or lucrative than the shot he splashed out of the water to 3 feet in a playoff victory in the 2011 Tour Championship, Haas came through with another bold play Sunday after his drive on the par-5 18th stopped on top of the front lip of a right fairway bunker.

"You got to come up with something," Haas said.

Standing in the sand with the ball in dormant grass at nearly waist level, he choked up on an 8-iron and gave it a whack.

"I easily could have whiffed it, could have chunked it and moved it 5 yards," Haas said.

Instead, he hit it 80 yards



**Former U.S. President Bill Clinton, right, hands Bill Haas the trophy after Haas won the Humana Challenge golf tournament on the Palmer Private course at PGA West on Sunday, Jan. 25, 2015 in La Quinta, Calif.**

**Associated Press**

down the fairway. That left him 170 yards and he hit another 8-iron safely to the middle of the green to set up his winning two-putt par. He was afraid to hit left-handed and considered a one-handed shot standing backward.

"Using the little toe of the club left-handed, the water

was in play, out of bounds might have been in play, I just didn't feel comfortable doing that," Haas said. "I have done the thing before backwards where you do it one-handed and poke it down the fairway. I almost did that."

Haas pulled ahead with a 20-foot birdie putt on the

par-4 16th and escaped with the par on 18 for a one-stroke victory. He closed with a 5-under 67 for his sixth PGA Tour title. The 32-year-old former Wake Forest player won the 2010 event for his first tour victory.

"Honestly, if you would have told me I would have done this last week, I would have laughed at you," Haas said. "To be here is an unbelievable feeling."

Haas earned \$1,026,000, a fraction of the \$11.44 million he made in Atlanta in the 2011 Tour Championship.

His father, Jay, won the 1998 tournament. Haas' great uncle, 85-year-old Bob Goalby, was in the gallery at PGA West's Arnold Palmer Private Course. Goalby won the 1968 Masters.

Haas was making his first start since November. He took the break to rest his left wrist, fractured in April

when he fell down stairs.

"I played a little bit," Haas said. "I didn't just put the clubs up."

Haas got to 22 under with the birdie on 16, breaking a six-man tie for the lead.

"I've been in a tournament where I've been maybe one ahead or tied, but not with five or six guys right behind me knowing that if I dump one in the water, I go from winning to finishing 10th," Haas said.

Matt Kuchar, Charley Hoffman, Brendan Steele, Steve Wheatcroft and Sung Joon Park tied for second. Hoffman and Steele shot 64, Park had a 65, and Kuchar and Wheatcroft shot 67.

Haas kept a share of the lead with a key par save on the par-3 15th. Short-sided in the left bunker, he blasted to 6 feet.

"That was one of the moments where I knew if I missed that I was going from leading to maybe not even top 10," Haas said.

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# Williams sisters advance to quarterfinals at Australian Open

JOHN PYE

AP Sports Writer

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)

— The Williams sisters are back in the quarterfinals of a Grand Slam, and neither one is there just to watch. Venus Williams continued her impressive career resurgence at the Australian Open with a 6-3, 2-6, 6-1 win over sixth-seeded Agnieszka Radwanska on Monday night, reaching the last eight at a major for the first time since the 2010 U.S. Open.

Younger sister, Serena Williams, was supporting her and cheering for her from the stands at Rod Laver Arena, just hours after she had to dig deep for a 2-6, 6-3, 6-2 comeback win over Garbine Muguruza on the same court.

The sisters haven't both advanced this far at a major since Serena won Wimbledon in 2010, their careers seemingly veering off at opposite trajectories.

Serena has won five Grand Slam titles in the interim, lifting her tally to 18, while seven-time major winner Venus has labored for years since being diagnosed in 2011 with Sjogren's syndrome, which causes fatigue and inflammation. She'd only been beyond the third round once at a Grand Slam event since the start of 2011, and many thought she'd never return to the last eight. Even so, she's not getting too excited four wins into a tournament.

"I guess from the outside looking in, I guess it could look like that," the seven-time major winner said. "But for me I'm just really focused and poised right now. I feel like I've been here before, so it's not like I'm jumping up and down for joy, 'Oh, shoot, what is this? I've never done this.'

"Yes, I've done this. This is what I'm always going into each tournament thinking I want to do. Now is my moment and I want to keep this moment going." The 34-year-old Venus next face Madison Keys, a 19-year-old American who

ceded only four games to her in a second-round upset at the 2014 French Open.

"She made me play a lot better," Serena Williams said. "I had to play the best match of the tournament or else I was going to be

6-3. Keys advanced to her first Grand Slam quarterfinal with a 6-2, 6-4 win over good friend and fellow American Madison Brengle.

"It's a huge opportunity for me. I'm going to make the most of it," she said. "I want

for a couple of days.

There were times when she defended, times when she attacked, and times when she got lucky — like when Muguruza made a mess of an easy volley on break-point. But when she needed to assert some authority, she found something special — like her ace, ace, ace, service winner sequence to close the second set, and her crucial hold at the start of the third set when she saved six break points in an almost 13-minute game.

"When I got down, I was thinking, 'What can I do now?'" she said. "Whatever happens, I thought, I've won this five times."

She'll need every bit of confidence against the 1.61-meter (5-foot-3) Cibulkova, who pounded 44 winners and broke former No. 1-ranked Azarenka's serve seven times. The No. 10-ranked Cibulkova lost the final here last year to the now-retired Li Na, and is back in that kind of form. Top-ranked Novak Djokovic had a 6-4, 7-5, 7-5 win over Gilles Muller to reach the quarterfinals at a 23rd consecutive major. Next up, he faces No. 8 Milos Raonic, who moved into the last eight in Australia for the first time with a 6-4, 4-6, 6-3, 6-7 (7), 6-3 win over No. 12 Feliciano Lopez.

Defending champion Stan Wawrinka beat Guillermo Garcia-Lopez 7-6 (2), 6-4, 4-6, 7-6 (8) and will next take on U.S. Open finalist Kei Nishikori.

Spurred on by hundreds of flag-waving Japanese supporters at Rod Laver Arena, No. 5-ranked Nishikori had little trouble in a 6-3, 6-3, 6-3 win over No. 9 David Ferrer, who reached the French Open final and Australian Open semis in 2013. □



was inspired to play tennis by watching the Williams sisters.

Serena was motivated by a Grand Slam loss that stung her more than any last year in her match against No. 24-seeded Muguruza, who had con-

out."

The five-time Australian Open winner next faces Dominika Cibulkova, who reproduced the kind of tennis that took her to the final here last year as she beat two-time champion Victoria Azarenka 6-2, 3-6,

to be at the end of the tournament holding the trophy up. That's my goal in the long run."

Serena had difficulty breathing at times Monday, and coughed throughout the match, later saying she'd been sick



# Millsap, Horford lead Hawks to 16th straight win

**ATLANTA (AP)** — Paul Millsap scored 20 points and Al Horford added 19 as Eastern Conference-leading Atlanta topped the Minnesota Timberwolves 112-100 on Sunday, extending the Hawks' club record with their 16th straight win.

Jeff Teague finished with 15 points and seven of Atlanta's 30 assists as the Hawks won for the 30th time in 32 games.

Thaddeus Young had 26 points and Mo Williams added 20 for Minnesota. The Timberwolves, who are last in the Western Conference, have lost four straight and 20 of 22.

CAVALIERS 108, THUNDER 98

**CLEVELAND (AP)** — LeBron James scored 34 points, including the first eight in the fourth quarter, as the Cleveland Cavaliers beat the Oklahoma City Thunder for their sixth straight win.

James made a pair of 3-pointers and a nasty fade-away jumper to give the Cavs a 91-80 lead. Later, the four-time MVP fed Kevin Love for a 3-pointer with 3:38 left that put the Thunder away. The Cavs



Atlanta Hawks' Jeff Teague, center, shoot against the defense of Minnesota Timberwolves' Robbie Hummel, left, and Andrew Wiggins, right, in the second quarter of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Jan. 25, 2015, in Atlanta.

**Associated Press**

are 6-1 since James returned after missing eight games with a strained back and knee.

Love added 19 points and 13 rebounds, Kyrie Irving scored 21, and Tristan Thompson had 16 rebounds.

Kevin Durant scored 32 and Russell Westbrook had 22 for the Thunder, who went 3-2 on their longest road trip this season.

HEAT 96, BULLS 84

**CHICAGO (AP)** — Hassan Whiteside had an uncon-

ventional triple-double with a team-record and career-high 12 blocks to go with 14 points and 13 rebounds to help the Miami Heat beat the Chicago Bulls.

Dwyane Wade scored 26 points, Chris Bosh finished with 20 and Luol Deng scored 15 in his return to Chicago. Mario Chalmers had 15 points, and the Heat squashed whatever momentum the Bulls appeared to be building after beating San Antonio and Dallas.

Miami led by 10 at halftime, 12 going into the fourth quarter and remained in control the rest of the way. Pau Gasol had 13 points and 17 rebounds for Chicago, giving him 50 over the past three games. Derrick Rose scored 19 for Chicago, but missed all six 3-pointers.

PACERS 106, MAGIC 99

**ORLANDO, Florida (AP)** — David West scored 20 points and reserve Damjan Rudez added a career-high 18 as the Indiana Pac-

ers ended a seven-game losing streak with a win over the Orlando Magic.

The Pacers trailed by seven entering the fourth quarter, but got 16 points from Rudez in the final 12 minutes. They outscored the Magic 31-17 in the quarter.

George Hill had 17 points and six rebounds for Indiana in just his second game back from a left groin strain. Nik Vucevic led four Magic players in double figures with 27 points. It was the ninth straight Orlando opponent to score at least 100 points.

CLIPPERS 120, SUNS 100

**PHOENIX (AP)** — Blake Griffin and Chris Paul scored 23 points each as the Los Angeles Clippers used a 15-0 fourth-quarter run to beat the Phoenix Suns.

J.J. Redick scored 20 and DeAndre Jordan added 18 for the Clippers, who are 3-0 against the Suns this season. Los Angeles has won nine of its past 11 against Phoenix.

Isaiah Thomas scored 25 points and Eric Bledsoe added 17 for the Suns, who have lost two straight after winning seven in a row at home. □

## Kobe Bryant

**Continued from Page 17**

His famously resilient body has finally worn down from the accumulated grind of 19 seasons and several lengthy postseasons with the Lakers, including five NBA title runs.

After returning at nearly full strength in training camp, Bryant sat out eight games in the last month and played on a strict minutes limit to rest his 36-year-old body. He still dealt with assorted aches and setbacks before he injured his shoulder while dunking against the Pelicans.

The Lakers reacted to the news with disappointment and respect for Bryant, who was selected to the All-Star game for the 17th time last week. Bryant is averaging 22.3 points, 5.7 rebounds and 5.6 assists this season.

"Kobe is a warrior," Lakers forward Carlos Boozer said.



In this Wednesday, Jan. 21, 2015, file photo, Los Angeles Lakers guard Kobe Bryant (24) drives against New Orleans Pelicans guard Quincy Pondexter (20) during the second half of an NBA basketball game in New Orleans.

**Associated Press**

"He's strong, and he's going to attack rehab like he always has."

The Lakers also discouraged speculation that Bry-

ant's career might be over. He is the NBA's highest-paid player at \$23.5 million this season, and he is un-

der contract for \$25 million next year.

"I think he's done everything that you can possibly do in this league, and I think at times, we don't appreciate all the stuff that he's been able to accomplish," Scott said. "I don't think we appreciate how tough he is, all the injuries and other things that he's played with, to be able to come back the way that he's come back. I don't see Kobe as the type of guy that wants to leave his legacy on (these) terms. I think he wants to go out on his own terms. We'll just have to wait and see."

The Lakers (12-33) are in the midst of another aimless season, losing eight straight heading into Tuesday's visit from Washington. The 16-time NBA champion franchise is almost certain to miss the playoffs in consecutive seasons for the first time since 1976.

The Lakers also owe a first-round draft pick to the Phoenix Suns to complete their disastrous trade for Steve Nash, who played just 50 games in three years and never suited up this season. But Los Angeles will keep the pick this summer if it lands in the top five, providing ample incentive for fans to hope the Lakers' collapse is total.

Bryant wasn't at the Lakers' training complex Monday, and he didn't attend their loss to Houston on Sunday night. Scott plans to speak with Bryant throughout the week to see what he's thinking about his future, but he hopes Bryant isn't ready to quit.

"With the Achilles last year, everybody said he was done," Scott said. "He came back and I think the first month of the season, he proved to everybody that he still has a lot left in the tank. □



# Caps among East contenders; West race too tight to call

JOHN WAWROW  
AP Hockey Writer

**COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)** — Alex Ovechkin's familiar gap-toothed grin has returned with the Washington Capitals in the thick of the Eastern Conference playoff hunt.

Hardly anyone's smiling in the West, where the standings are far more convoluted heading into the post-All-Star break of the NHL schedule, which opens with 11 games Tuesday.

"It's hard," St. Louis Blues defenseman Kevin Shattenkirk said during the All-Star festivities in Columbus, Ohio, over the weekend. "If you lose three, four games in a row, it's scary because you find yourself in eighth place when you were in first a week ago."

It's a tale of two conferences.

In the West, seven points separate the fourth-place San Jose Sharks from the 11th-place Dallas Stars. Don't count out the 12th-place Minnesota Wild, who rode a 23-10-7 second-half surge to clinch a playoff spot last year.

And then there's the defending Stanley Cup champion Los Angeles Kings who are a single point out of the postseason picture at the moment.

"We've had some spurts where we played pretty good," Kings forward Anze Kopitar said. "But we also had some moments where we didn't play very good at all."

In the East, the Capitals (24-13-9) are seventh, but part of a top-eight group of contenders that have begun separating themselves from the bottom eight.

And that, so far, is fine with Ovechkin who is feeling much better after one his most trying years.

"Before the season, I said, it's a very important year for us, for me, for the whole group of guys on the team," said Ovechkin, who made his fifth career NHL All-Star Game appearance. "We all wanted to

come back and show last year was maybe a little bit of no luck."

The Capitals not only missed the playoffs for the first time in seven seasons, Ovechkin's frustrations were compounded on the other side of the Atlantic. That's where he and his fellow Russians wilted under immense national pressure by failing to even sniff an Olympic medal on native soil at the Sochi Games.

The Capitals have successfully made the transition under new coach Barry Trotz, and shored up their defense by adding Brooks Orpik and Matt Niskanen. Ovechkin's production has barely slowed, and put him in contention to win his fifth career and third straight scoring title.

His 27 goals are one off the league-lead shared by Dallas' Tyler Seguin and New York Rangers' Rick Nash.

And Ovechkin's defensive numbers are markedly improved. After finishing third-last in the NHL with a minus-35 rating, he's currently 40th with a plus-12.

Steven Stamkos, captain of the East-leading Tampa Bay Lightning, isn't exactly rooting for Alex The Great's return to the playoffs. But, he noted, it would be good for hockey to have such a high-profile player competing well into the spring.

"It's great that he's having a great year," Stamkos said. "Any time you have a top player playing well it only adds to building our game."

The East teams outside the playoff hunt have plenty of catching up to do. The youth-laden Florida Panthers — whose roster includes rookie No. 1 pick, defenseman Aaron Ekblad — are ninth. Ottawa and Toronto are next with 47 points, and shown few signs of consistency even after both Ontario rivals changed coaches over the past two months.

The West is filled with intrigue, which shouldn't come as a surprise after



Washington Capitals left wing Alex Ovechkin, of Russia, celebrates after scoring his second goal against the Nashville Predators in the second period of an NHL hockey game Friday, Jan. 16, 2015, in Nashville.

Associated Press

many top teams spent last summer stocking up on high-profile free agents. Still, there are three teams — San Jose (fourth place), Winnipeg (seventh) and Calgary (eighth) — that are in the hunt despite not making many offseason splashes.

Chicago and St. Louis both find themselves looking up in the Central Division at Nashville.

"It's a tough division to be in, but it's also a good division to be in," Blackhawks defenseman Brent Seabrook said. "We're all playing meaningful games down the stretch, getting ready for the playoffs."

Not all will make it. There is a race to watch at the other end of the standings.

Buffalo (14-30-3) and Edmonton (12-26-9) have been locked in a battle for futility and, more important, the right to land the top draft prospects — Erie Otters forward Connor McDavid and U.S.-born, Boston University freshman Jack Eichel.

The Sabres are suddenly gaining the "edge" for last place and, with it, a guaranteed top-two selection. They entered the All-Star breaking having lost 11 straight in regulation — the NHL's worst streak since Pittsburgh lost 13 in a row from January to February 2004, according to STATS.

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# Tavares scores 4, Team Toews outscores Team Foligno, 17-12

**RUSTY MILLER**

**AP Sports Writer**

**COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)** —

John Tavares of the New York Islanders matched a record with four goals as Team Toews beat Team Foligno 17-12 on Sunday in the highest-scoring NHL All-Star game.

The wild, no-defense exhibition even featured a fake fight to go with goals in bunches.

The 29 goals were the most in the event's 60-year history, eclipsing the 26-goal burst in North America's 14-12 victory over the World in 2001.

Ryan Johansen, of the hometown Columbus Blue Jackets, had two goals and two assists for the losing team but still won the Most Valuable Player award in voting by fans on Twitter.

Philadelphia Flyers forward Jake Voracek — formerly of the Blue Jackets — scored three goals and tied a



**Team Foligno's Ryan Johansen, of the Columbus Blue Jackets, is interviewed after being chosen the Most Valuable Player in the NHL All-Star hockey game in Columbus, Ohio, Sunday, Jan. 25, 2015. Team Toews won 17-12.**

**Associated Press**

game record with six points for Team Toews. That mark was set by Mario Lemieux. Tavares' four goals gave him a share of the All-Star record that was established by Wayne Gretzky in 1983, and equaled by Lemieux (1990), Vincent Damphousse (1991), Mike Gartner (1993) and Dany Heatley (2003).

Captain Jonathan Toews of the Chicago Blackhawks had a goal and four assists, as did Boston's Patrice Bergeron. Dallas' Tyler Seguin had two goals and two assists, Filip Forsberg of Nashville, and Rick Nash of the New York Rangers — another former Columbus star — both scored twice, and Florida's Aaron Ek-

blad and St. Louis' Vladimir Tarasenko each had four assists.

For Team Foligno, led by Blue Jackets forward Nick Foligno, Chicago's Patrick Kane and Tampa Bay's Steven Stamkos had two goals and an assist apiece, Philadelphia's Claude Giroux had a goal and two assists, and Washington's Alexander Ovechkin added three assists.

The NHL has determined the teams by a number of geographic and divisional setups over the 60 years. Just like on ponds around the globe, these lineups were determined by a player draft on Friday night. The fake fight provided some energy to a capacity crowd of 18,901 on the game's first visit to Ohio's capital city. Late in the second period, during a scrum in front of the net, Ovechkin and Foligno pretended to mix it up with Calgary's

Mark Giordano and Chicago's Brent Seabrook.

All of the players were laughing after they grabbed and hugged each other.

It was fitting that Toews scored the goal that shattered the record. He held off defenseman Brent Burns of San Jose to find the net with a rising shot with 5:39 left.

With the game tied at 4 after a period, Team Toews broke it open with six goals in 9 1/2 minutes — and a record seven in the frame.

The teams scored twice within 8 seconds in the opening minute and three goals in a 58-second span, as the arena announcer stacked up goal announcements and was three behind at one point. Tavares had two goals, Voracek notched his second, and Ryan Suter, Nash, Forsberg and Anaheim's Ryan Getzlaf each notched their first for Toews.



**Houston Texans' J.J. Watt (99) celebrates after recovering a fumble during the second half of the NFL Football Pro Bowl Sunday, Jan. 25, 2015, in Glendale, Ariz.**

**Associated Press**

**BOB BAUM**

**AP Sports Writer**

**GLENDAL, Arizona (AP)** —

Few moved very fast, no one flattened a quarterback and there were no bone-jarring hits in the gentle, friendly version of football played at the Pro Bowl Sunday.

Even in a game dominated by offense, J.J. Watt was the star.

The Texans defensive end intercepted pass, recovered a fumble and led the crowd in dances during

commercial breaks.

Team Irvin defeated 32-28 Watt's Team Carter, but the score is never important in the NFL's all-star game.

Everyone seemed to have a good time, particularly Watt, the game's defensive MVP.

Other memorable moments came from Saints tight end Jimmy Graham, who dunked over the crossbar twice after TD catches — this time with no penalty, and Giants rookie Odell

## Watt gets 2 turnovers, dances in friendly Pro Bowl

Beckham Jr. who made a diving grab at midfield. Graham's second touchdown, on a 1-yard, fourth-down pass from Matt Ryan, was the winning TD with 3:10 to play.

Greg Olsen and Emmanuel Sanders also caught a pair of touchdown passes apiece. Andrew Luck was nearly perfect in his short time on the field, completing 9 of 10 for 119 yards and two scores. Matthew Stafford threw for 316 yards and two TDs and was the offensive MVP.

The Pro Bowl took a one-year hiatus from Hawaii to be played in the desert to coincide with the big game. A sellout crowd of 63,225 watched at University of Phoenix Stadium as the teams moved up and down the field, often without much resistance. If the players missed the beach, they wouldn't let on.

"It's been fantastic," Dal-

las quarterback Tony Romo said.

"The turnout here at the stadium is just like an NFL game."

Romo knew this wasn't a real NFL game.

"It's a blast," Stafford said. "To be able to play with the best in the world is a whole lot of fun, and everybody is such good people, too. I am out here having a good time."

The NFL scrapped the AFC vs. NFC format last year in favor of having two big-name former players draft players four days before the game. This year, the honor went to Michael Irvin and Cris Carter.

There were teammates playing against teammates.

When Green Bay's Jordy Nelson made a pretty fingertip touchdown catch from Drew Brees for Team Carter.

He celebrated with his Packers teammate Clay

Matthews, who was playing for the other team.

Beckham dove to the ground and gathered in Stafford's long pass just as the ball was about to hit the ground.

When Graham caught a six-yard touchdown pass from Stafford, he soared to dunk the ball over crossbar. The New Orleans tight end was fined \$30,000 when he did that twice, and was penalized both times, in a pre-season game. There was no penalty on Sunday.

"I really wanted to catch one here because this is I guess the only place I can dunk without a flag," Graham said. "But you know, the league called down and told me not to hang on it, so I didn't."

The goal posts were narrowed to from 18.6 feet to 14 feet on all kicks, not just PATs as had been previously announced. The PATs also were moved back to make it a 33-yard kick.



# Sheriffs want popular police-tracking app disabled

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — Sheriffs are pressuring Google Inc. to turn off a feature on its Waze traffic software that warns drivers when police are nearby. They say one of the technology industry's most popular mobile apps could put officers' lives in danger.

Waze, which Google purchased for \$966 million in 2013, is a combination of GPS navigation and social networking. Fifty million users in 200 countries turn to the free service for real-time traffic guidance and warnings about nearby congestion, car accidents, speed traps or traffic cameras, construction zones, stalled vehicles or unsafe weather conditions.

To Sergio Kopelev, a reserve deputy sheriff in California, Waze is also a stalking app for law enforcement.

There are no known connections between any attack on police and Waze, but Kopelev and others are concerned it's only a matter of time.

They are seeking support among law enforcement trade groups to pressure Google.

Brown and Kopelev raised concerns during the meeting of the National Sheriffs Association winter conference in Washington. They pointed to the Instagram account of the man accused of fatally shooting two New York Police Department officers last month. Ismaaiyl Brinsley posted a screenshot from Waze along with messages threatening police. Investigators do not believe he used Waze to ambush the officers, in part because police say Brinsley tossed his cellphone far from where he shot the officers.

The executive director of the Fraternal Order of Police, Jim Pasco, said his organization has concerns.

The emerging policy debate places Google again at the center of a global debate about public safety, consumer rights and privacy.

Waze users mark police



This image taken from the the Waze app on an iPhone, left, in Washington, shows police at the scene on a map on the app; and right, this image shows apps in cluding the Waze app, lower right on an iPhone in Washington. Associated Press



presence on maps without much distinction other than "visible" or "hidden." Users see a police icon, but it's not immediately clear whether police are there for a speed trap, a sobriety check or a lunch break.

A Waze spokeswoman, Julie Mossler, said the company works with the New York Police Department and others around the world.

"These relationships keep citizens safe, promote faster emergency response and help alleviate traffic congestion," Mossler said.

Google declined to comment.

Google has a complicated relationship with government and law enforcement. The company is regularly compelled to turn over to police worldwide copies of

emails or other information about its customers. Last year, after disclosures that the National Security Agency had illicitly broken into Google's overseas Internet communication lines, Google and other technology companies rolled out encryption for users, which the U.S. government said could hamper law enforcement investigations. Nuala O'Connor, head of the Center for Democracy and Technology, a Washington civil liberties group, said it would not be appropriate for Google to disable the police-reporting feature. "I do not think it is legitimate to ask a person-to-person communication to cease simply because it reports on publicly visible law enforcement," she said. She said a bigger concern among privacy advocates is how much information about customers Waze shares with law enforcement, since the service monitors their location continually as long as it's turned on. □

## WikiLeaks slams Google over delay in revealing U.S. warrants

**FRANK JORDANS**  
**Associated Press**

**BERLIN (AP)** — WikiLeaks on Monday criticized Google for failing to swiftly inform the secrets-spilling group about U.S. search warrants issued seeking emails and other personal information from three of its staff.

The warrants, issued in March 2012, required the Internet giant to hand over the phone numbers, IP addresses, credit card details, contents of all emails and other details for Google accounts used by Sarah Harrison, Kristinn Hrafnsson and Joseph Faerrell. The existence of the warrants, which cite an espionage, fraud and conspiracy investiga-

tion, was disclosed to WikiLeaks in December.

"We are astonished and disturbed that Google waited over two and a half years to notify its subscribers that a search warrant was issued for their records," WikiLeaks' lawyer Michael Ratner said in a letter to Google chairman Eric Schmidt that was published online Monday.

The letter adds that Twitter took legal action in order to alert WikiLeaks of a similar warrant in 2011.

Google declined to comment directly on the case, but referred The Associated Press to a statement the company made last year in which it pledged to vet

all subpoenas and court orders so as to ensure they meet the letter and spirit of the law.

"We don't know if Google tried to litigate it or not, but that's one of our requests to Google," Ratner, who is with the New York-based Center For Constitutional Rights, said during a news conference.

Speaking at a news conference in Geneva, Baltasar Garzon, a Spanish former judge who now represents WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, said the warrants appeared to be part of a "fishing expedition" by U.S. authorities against the website. WikiLeaks has repeatedly published sensitive



Kristinn Hrafnsson, left, spokesman for the WikiLeaks organization, Sarah Harrison, center, journalist with WikiLeaks, and former Spanish judge, Baltasar Garzon., right, Director of WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange's defence team, arrive for a press conference, at the Press Club, in Geneva, Switzerland, Monday, Jan. 26, 2015. Associated Press

U.S. government documents ranging from classified diplomatic cables to Iraq and Afghanistan battlefield reports.

Harrison said that while the data handed over by Google wouldn't have included any internal communication between WikiLeaks staff, U.S. authorities would

have been able to gather information about her private life from an old Gmail address.

WikiLeaks said it has requested U.S. prosecutors explain whether the three — none of whom are American citizens — are witnesses, subjects or targets of the investigation. □



## Post Holdings to pay \$1.15B for Malt-O-Meal cereal maker

**ST. LOUIS (AP)** — Post Holdings will spend \$1.15 billion to bulk up its presence in the cereal aisle by buying the privately held MOM Brands Co., maker of Malt-O-Meal cereals. Post said Monday it will pay \$1.05 billion in cash and give MOM Brands owners nearly 2.5 million shares of stock for the acquisi-

tion, which is expected to be completed in the third quarter. MOM Brands' product portfolio includes branded, ready-to-eat cereals as well as hot wheat and oatmeal products. Its cereals include Golden Puffs, Frosted Mini Spooners and Cinnamon Toasters, which are similar to cereals made by competitors but

generally sold in bags at lower prices. The company is based in Lakeville, Minnesota. The deal comes at a tough time for the cereal business, as more people are looking for breakfasts they can eat on the go or avoiding carbohydrates or gluten in favor of protein. Post has been on acquisition spree lately to diversify,

adding the PowerBar and Musashi nutrition brands, which it purchased from Nestle SA, and the peanut butter maker American Blanching Co. Last June, it completed a \$2.45 billion acquisition of fellow packaged food maker Michael Foods Inc. Post Holdings Inc. plans to finance most of the MOM

Brands deal and sell about \$240 million in stock, subject to market conditions. Post, which is based in St. Louis, also makes nutrition drinks and a variety of store-brand products including pasta. It said Monday that it expects about \$1.07 billion in revenue for the fiscal quarter that ended Dec. 31. □

## Stocks eke out small gains after drifting most of the day

**ALEX VEIGA**  
**AP Business Writer**

U.S. stocks eked out tiny gains on Monday after spending much of the day drifting sideways. Major stock indexes barely budged early as investors

ings  
Traders welcomed news of several corporate mergers, including an \$11 billion deal between reinsurers Axis Capital Holdings and PartnerRe. "Greece was the big driv-

calmed the markets a bit." The market also brushed off concerns of a major blizzard set to descend over the Northeast U.S. The stock exchanges were expected to open for business as usual on Tuesday.

13.88 points, or 0.3 percent, to 4,771.76. Monday's market action got off to a listless start, as the major market indexes held mostly unchanged from Friday's close. Investors were still digesting Sunday's election victory by Greece's Syriza party, which has vowed to end painful austerity policies. That's raised concerns about whether Greece will break free from the Eurozone. The country's current bailout plan concludes at the end of February.

European markets' initial reaction to the election was positive, sending Germany's DAX up 1.4 percent, while the CAC-40 in France rose 0.7 percent. The main stock market in Greece recouped some of its early losses to end 3.2 percent lower. "European markets reflected worse expectations for the outcome of this election and, as a result, they're seeing this as better-than-expected news," said Kate Warne, an investment strategist at Edward Jones. Six of the 10 sectors in the S&P 500 ended higher, and energy companies rose the most. The price of oil

fell on continuing expectations of high supplies, but comments from an OPEC official suggested that the recent price plunge might be near an end.

Corporate deals also helped push some stocks sharply higher Monday. Packaging company MeadWestvaco agreed to combine with Rock-Tenn Co. to create a \$16 billion company, which will be named before the deal closes. MeadWestvaco jumped 14 percent, to lead all stocks in the S&P 500. The stock gained \$6.31 to \$51.35. Rock-Tenn vaulted \$3.86, or 6.1 percent, to \$66.85. Post Holdings jumped 18 percent on news that the company has agreed to acquire privately held MOM Brands in a deal that involves \$1.05 billion in cash and nearly 2.5 million shares of stock. MOM's products include cereals, hot wheat and oatmeal products. Post shares gained \$7.39 to \$48.83. Investors also cheered the combination of Axis Capital and PartnerRe, lifting Axis shares \$2.81, or 5.7 percent, to \$52.14. PartnerRe gained \$1.36, or 1.2 percent, to \$115.50. □



**Trader Brandon Barb, center, works the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. U.S. stocks eked out tiny gains on Monday after spending much of the day drifting sideways like the snow falling on New York City. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)**

took in stride the election of a Greek political party that has called for the elimination of some of that nation's rescue loans. Market players also weighed the latest batch of corporate earn-

er," said Chris Gaffney, a senior market strategist at EverBank Wealth Management. "The EU leaders have already come out and are willing to talk about extending the debt, so that

The Dow Jones industrial added 6.10 points, or 0.03 percent, to 17,678.70. The Standard & Poor's 500 gained 5.27 points, or 0.3 percent, to 2,057.09. The Nasdaq composite rose

## MeadWestvaco, Rock-Tenn join to form \$16B behemoth

**M. FELBERBAUM**  
**AP Business Writer**

**RICHMOND, Va. (AP)** — Rock-Tenn and MeadWestvaco will join forces to create a \$16 billion global packaging company, driving down its own costs and possibly gaining the scale to better dictate prices. The new company, which had not been named as of Monday, will have combined sales of \$15.7 billion

and its board will include eight directors from Rock-Tenn and six directors from MeadWestvaco. Within three years, the deal is expected to result in annual cost savings of \$300 million, though officials did not say if the savings would include job cuts at any of its locations around the world. Over the last several years, MeadWestvaco has gone from a mill-centric paper

supplier to a global packaging maker for brands like Procter & Gamble, Coca-Cola and Wal-Mart. This month, the company announced plans to spin off its specialty chemicals business and the sale of its European-based tobacco folding carton business — both which will move forward as planned. In late 2013, MeadWestvaco sold its U.S. forestland

holdings. Under the terms of the deal that's expected to close in the second quarter, MeadWestvaco Corp. stockholders will receive 0.78 shares of the combined company for each share they own. Rock-Tenn shareholders will be allowed to choose either 1 share of the combined company or a specific cash amount for each Rock-Tenn Co. share held.

Rock-Tenn CEO Steven Voorhees will become CEO and John Luke, Jr., chairman and CEO of MeadWestvaco, will become non-executive chairman. The company will have its principal executive offices in Richmond, Virginia, where MeadWestvaco is based. It will have operating offices in Norcross, Georgia, where Rock-Tenn is based. □



## Reagan, Obama and Inequality



**NICHOLAS KRISTOF**  
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Since the end of the 1970s, something has gone profoundly wrong in America.

Inequality has soared. Educational progress slowed. Incarceration rates quintupled. Family breakdown accelerated. Median household income stagnated.

"It's morning again in America" - that was a campaign slogan by President Ronald Reagan in 1984. But, in retrospect, the average American has been stuck since the Reagan era in a predawn darkness of stagnation and inequality, and we still haven't shaken it off, particularly since 2000. Inequality has increased further under President Barack Obama.

That's the context for Obama's call, in his State of the Union address, for greater economic fairness. But first, the caveats. His proposals are dead on arrival in Congress. They won't be implemented and probably won't change the public's thinking: Research by George C. Edwards, a political scientist, finds that presidential speeches rarely persuade the public much.

Remember the 2014 State of the Union address? Of course not. Of 18 proposals in it, there was action on two, according to PBS. Or Obama's passionate call in his 2013 State of the Union for measures to reduce gun violence? Nothing much resulted, and the word "guns" didn't even pass his lips this time.

Yet the bully pulpit still can shape the national agenda and nag at the American conscience. I don't fully agree with Obama's solutions - how could he skip over early-childhood interventions?! - but he's exactly right in the way he framed the inequality issue: "Will we accept an economy where only a few of us do spectacularly well?"

Some background. Even with the global Great Depression, the United States performed brilliantly in the first three-quarters of the 20th century, with incomes and education mostly rising and inequality flat or falling - and gains were broadly shared by poor and rich alike. High school graduation rates surged, GI's went to college, and the United States led the world in educational attainment.

And, in part of this remarkable era, the top federal income tax rate exceeded 90 percent. Republicans might remember that point when they warn that Obama's proposals for modestly higher taxes would

savage the American economy. Then, for average Americans, the roof fell in around the end of the 1970s. The '70s were "the end of normal," the economist James K. Galbraith argues in a new book of that title. Afterward, the economy continued to grow overall, but the spoils went to the wealthy and the bottom 90 percent barely benefited.

Median household income is little greater today than it was in 1979. Today, the typical family in Canada appears better off than the typical American family.

By some measures, education - our seed corn for the future - has pretty much stalled. More young American men today have less education than their parents (29 percent) than have more education (20 percent). Among industrialized countries as a whole, 70 percent of 3-year-olds go to preschool; in the United States, 38 percent do.

I wonder if the celebration of unfettered capitalism and "greed is good" since the Reagan era didn't help shape social mores in ways that accelerated inequality. In any case, Reagan was right on one point - "the best social program is a productive job" - and Obama offered sound proposals to increase incentives for work. Better child-care and sick-leave policies would also make work more feasible. The United States is the only country among the 34 in the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development that provides no paid maternity leave.

Oddly, Obama didn't push early-childhood initiatives, focused on kids from newborns to 5 years old, that have a particularly strong evidence base for creating opportunity.

Early-education initiatives poll well, and some of the leaders in programming have been red states like Oklahoma. So while the Obama agenda is mostly for show, expansion of preschool could actually occur at least at the state level.

Obama rightly heralded the fall in teenage pregnancy rates. But he had little to do with it (although the MTV show "16 and Pregnant" played a role!), and about 30 percent of American girls still get pregnant by age 19. Making reliable birth control available to at-risk teenagers would help them, reduce abortion rates and even pay for itself in reduced social spending later.

In America, we have subsidized private jets, big banks and hedge fund managers. Wouldn't it make more sense to subsidize kids? So if higher capital gains taxes can pay for better education, infrastructure and jobs, of course that trade-off is worthwhile.

Congressional Republicans seem focused on a pipeline that isn't even economically viable at today's oil prices. Let's hope that the national agenda can broaden along the lines that Obama suggests, so that the last 35 years become an aberration rather than a bellwether.

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Contact Kristof at Facebook.com/Kristof, Twitter.com/NickKristof or by mail at The New York Times, 620 Eighth Ave., New York, NY 10018. □



## Where the Road Meets the Walrus

**GAIL COLLINS**  
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Let's raise the gas tax.

There are several reasons we need to discuss this now. One is that plummeting gasoline prices make the idea very timely. Also, people will still be asking you this week what you thought of President Barack Obama's State of the Union address. Even though he did not mention the gas tax, bringing it up will allow you to avoid having an opinion on whether it's time to close the capital gains stepped-up-basis loophole.



The gas tax raises much-needed money for roads and mass transit. Our roads, you may have noticed, are falling apart. Every time you hit a pothole, yell: "Raise the gas tax!" Even more important, it encourages Americans to use fuel-efficient cars. While we're all happy as clams about falling gas prices, every gallon produces more than 19 pounds of planet-warming emissions. We just had the hottest year on record. The ice floes are melting. Walrus keep piling up along the Alaskan shore, where the babies can get squashed.

Raise the gas tax and remember the walrus.

Plus, it's not really a tax! Or at least not necessarily. Just ask Ronald Reagan. When he entered office,

Reagan said he didn't see the likelihood of a gas tax increase "unless there's a palace coup." But then, you know, stuff happened and The Great Communicator discovered that a levy on gasoline wasn't really a tax but merely a "user fee." So no problem at all, and under his administration the, um, fee was more than doubled.

Ah, Ronald Reagan. Perhaps you noticed, during the State of the Union, that Obama was urging Congress to bring the capital gains tax back up to Reagan-era levels? Who'd have thought? We live in ironic times, people.

But about the gas tax. It was also raised under George H.W. (The Good One) Bush, and then again under Bill Clinton. Remember Al Gore breaking the tie in the Senate? Ah, Al Gore.

And that was it. The federal gas tax, currently 18.4 cents a gallon, is not indexed for inflation, and it has not gone up since 1993. The Highway Trust Fund, which pays for the federal highway construction program, keeps falling deeper into the red. It's scheduled to implode sometime this spring.

The White House has been very clear about its lack of enthusiasm for solving the problem with a gas tax increase. Mainly, the objection is that if Congress wouldn't pass Obama's proposal to pay for early education with a tobacco tax, it's not going to fund road repair with a gas tax. This is a pretty good point. However, deeply cynical souls could also argue that the current majority likes road construction more than preschool.

During the State of the Union, Obama made his pitch for another idea: reform the tax on overseas business profits, creating a one-time-only windfall of revenue for the government to use in a mega-road-building spree.

Three reasons the gas tax is a better idea:

- 1) Walrus.
- 2) Half the members of Congress

are eyeing that very same windfall to pay for their own pet programs. 3) Only works once. "It's just a coward's way out," says Sen. Bob Corker, R-Tenn. Genuine fiscal conservatives hate the idea of paying for permanent ongoing programs with one-shot revenues. Corker has been known to complain that he's been in the Senate for eight years and never saw Congress permanently solve a problem. Last year Corker and Sen. Chris Murphy, D-Conn., floated the idea of raising the gas tax 12 cents over two years. "Our bet when we went out on a limb last year was that we could position it as a topic for serious discussion this year, and I hope it's going to pay off," Murphy said. And it's working, sort of. A number of prominent Republicans have been muttering things like "nothing is off the table." Sen. James Inhofe, R-Okla., the new chairman of the Environment and Public Works Committee, and a man whose position on global warming makes him an enemy to walrus everywhere, has said a gas tax is "one of the options." An option that is not off the table! Truly, the worm has turned.

On the other hand, Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wis., the new chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, recently announced: "We won't pass a gas tax." That would seem to be somewhat discouraging, but there are still these gleams of hope that Republicans might come around since:

- You can call it a user fee. (Ask Reagan)

- Obama doesn't like it.

- Compromise is possible. Many conservatives hate the fact that the Highway Trust Fund also helps support mass transit and invests in things like highway beautification and bike paths. There might be some room for give here. Let's throw something in the fund under the proverbial bus. I nominate "transportation museums."

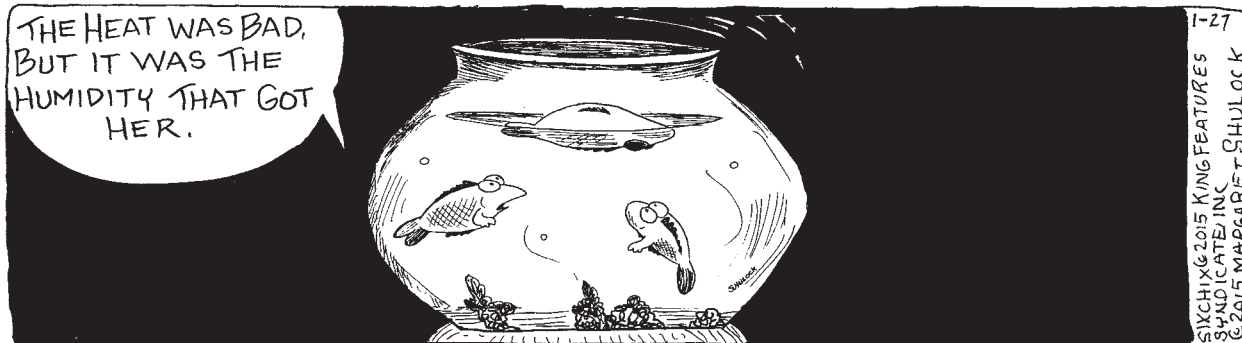
Walrus seconds the motion. □



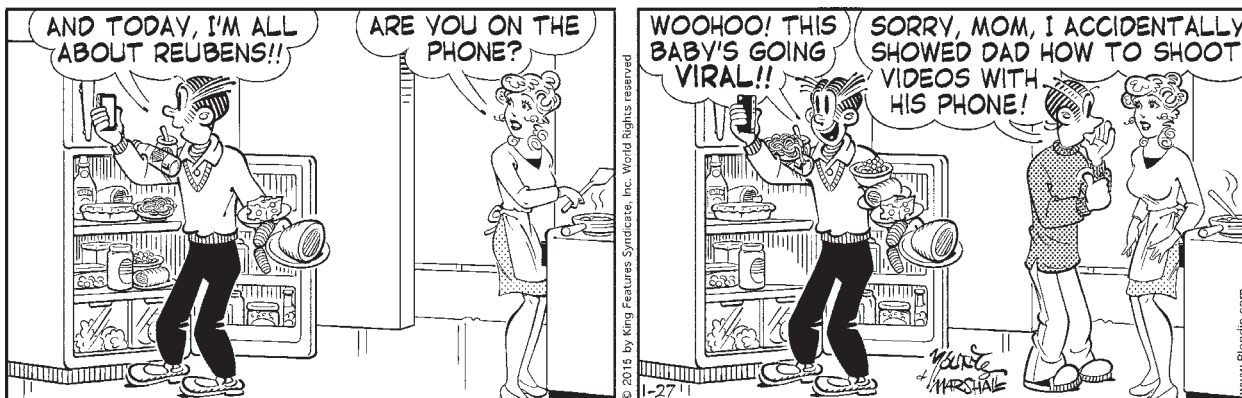
## Mutts



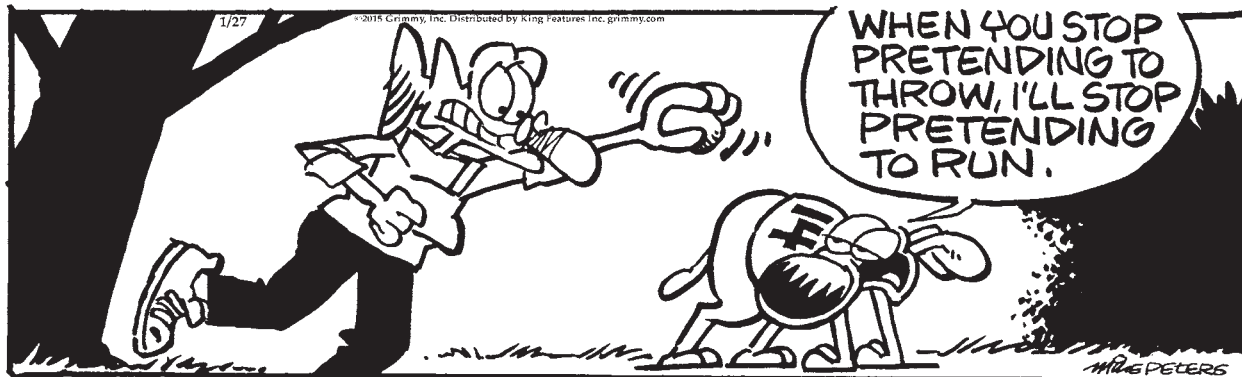
## 6 Chix



## Blondie



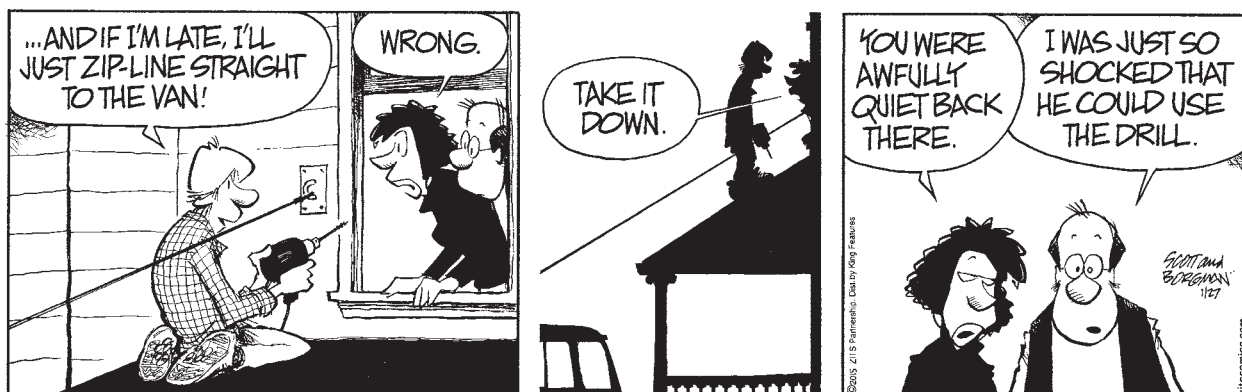
## Mother Goose & Grimm



## Baby Blues



## Zits



## Conceptis Sudoku

3								4
	1		5		6		8	
9				3				6
	2		7		3		4	
		6				7		
	5		6		2		3	
8				2				5
	7		4		9		2	
6								9

Difficulty Level ★★

1/27

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

1	8	9	5	2	6	4	3	7
4	5	7	1	3	8	6	2	9
2	6	3	4	9	7	8	5	1
3	9	8	7	1	5	2	6	4
6	2	1	9	8	4	3	7	5
7	4	5	2	6	3	1	9	8
9	7	6	8	4	2	5	1	3
8	1	2	3	5	9	7	4	6
5	3	4	6	7	1	9	8	2

## ACROSS

- Unhurried
- Hit hard
- Shade trees
- Grandiose publicity
- Person
- Get an "F"
- Brothers; 1950s quartet
- Nimble
- Monetary penalty
- Trusted counselors
- Toiled
- One of Santa's little helpers
- Fragrant wood
- Sliver of glass
- Ford or Lincoln
- Remains
- Crocheter's purchase
- Tavern
- Fish out of water
- Mai tai ingredient
- Foreboding
- Relaxing drink
- Fantasyland
- Nourished
- Collapsed
- Danger
- London saloon
- Crowd
- Not forbidden
- That woman
- Fights against
- Capital of New Mexico
- Judge's order
- Costs; no matter what
- Look \_\_; view
- "The \_\_ Ranger"
- Fit for a king
- Bookish fellow
- Drove too fast
- Hillside
- Old ladies?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14				15					16			
17				18					19			
20				21				22	23			
			24				25					
26	27	28				29			30	31	32	33
34				35				36				
37				38				39			40	
41			42				43				44	
45							46				47	
			48	49				50				
51	52	53					54			55	56	57
58						59	60				61	
62						63					64	
65						66					67	

Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

1/27/15

## Monday's Puzzle Solved

OTTER	SPAN	ABES
PURSE	WACO	DONT
TRUCE	INTO	JOSE
SNEAKERS	STATUE	
PILL	REACHED	
OFFEND	AISLE	
ARE	GEARS	KNACK
REAP	RIDES	TILE
STRAW	LOSER	RUN
LOWER	TEASES	
WATERED	HUGE	
AGENDA	SEPARATE	
CANE	LIMA	TIBIA
KISS	TOOL	TALES
ONES	HUGS	ALERT

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1/27/15

- |                                 |                   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|
| 38 Metal office cabinet folders | 50 Actress Berry  |
| 39 Jan.'s follower              | 51 Night birds    |
| 42 Flew a plane                 | 52 __ up; support |
| 44 Lots of money                | 53 Evergreen tree |
| 46 Pale color                   | 54 Swat           |
| 47 Laying bird                  | 55 Pinnacle       |
| 49 Shift __; make a change      | 56 Links cry      |
|                                 | 57 Wraps up       |
|                                 | 60 In the past    |

## DOWN

- Counterfeit



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## Millions of GMO insects could be released in Florida Keys

JENNIFER KAY

Associated Press

KEY WEST, Florida (AP)

— Millions of genetically modified mosquitoes could be released in the Florida Keys if British researchers win approval to use the bugs against two extremely painful viral diseases.

Never before have insects with modified DNA come so close to being set loose in a residential U.S. neighborhood.

"This is essentially using a mosquito as a drug to cure disease," said Michael Doyle, executive director of the Florida Keys Mosquito Control District, which is waiting to hear if the federal Food and Drug Administration will allow the experiment.

Dengue and chikungunya are growing threats in the U.S., but some people are more frightened at the thought of being bitten by a genetically modified organism. More than 130,000 people signed a Change.org petition against the experiment.

Even potential boosters say those responsible must do more to show that benefits outweigh the risks of breeding modified insects that



This undated photo made available by Oxitec shows a genetically modified *Aedes aegypti* mosquito in their U.K. lab.

could bite people.

"I think the science is fine, they definitely can kill mosquitoes, but the GMO issue still sticks as something of a thorny issue for the general public," said Phil Lounibos, who studies mosquito control at the Florida Medical Entomology Laboratory.

Mosquito controllers say they're running out of options. With climate change and globalization spreading tropical diseases farther from the equator, storm winds, cargo ships and hu-

mans carry these viruses to places like Key West, the southernmost U.S. city. There are no vaccines or cures for dengue, known as "break-bone fever," or chikungunya, so painful it causes contortions. U.S. cases remain rare.

Insecticides are sprayed year-round in the Keys' charming and crowded neighborhoods. But *Aedes aegypti*, whose biting females spread these diseases, have evolved to resist four of the six insecticides used to kill them.

Enter Oxitec, a British biotech firm that patented a method of breeding *Aedes aegypti* with fragments of genes from the herpes simplex virus and *E. coli* bacteria as well as coral and cabbage. This synthetic DNA is commonly used in laboratory science and is thought to pose no significant risks to other animals, but it kills mosquito larvae. Oxitec's lab workers manually remove modified fe-

males, aiming to release only males, which don't bite for blood like females do. The modified males then mate with wild females whose offspring die, reducing the population. Oxitec has built a breeding lab in Marathon and hopes to release its mosquitoes in a Key West neighborhood this spring.

FDA spokeswoman Theresa Eisenman said no field tests will be allowed until the agency has "thoroughly reviewed all the necessary information."

Company spokeswoman Chris Creese said the test will be similar in size to Oxitec's 2012 experiment in the Cayman Islands, where 3.3 million modified mosquitoes were released over six months, suppressing 96 percent of the targeted bugs. Oxitec says a later test in Brazil also was successful, and both countries now want larger-scale projects. But critics accused Oxitec of failing to obtain informed

consent in the Caymans, saying residents weren't told they could be bitten by a few stray females overlooked in the lab.

Instead, Oxitec said only non-biting males would be released, and that even if humans were somehow bitten, no genetically modified DNA would enter their bloodstream.

Neither claim is entirely true, outside observers say. "I'm on their side, in that consequences are highly unlikely. But to say that there's no genetically modified DNA that might get into a human, that's kind of a gray matter," said Lounibos.

Creese says Oxitec has now released 70 million of its mosquitoes in several countries and received no reports of human impacts caused by bites or from the synthetic DNA, despite regulatory oversight that encourages people to report any problems. "We are confident of the safety of our mosquito, as there's no mechanism for any adverse effect on human health. The proteins are non-toxic and non-allergenic," she said.

Oxitec should still do more to show that the synthetic DNA causes no harm when transferred into humans by its mosquitoes, said Guy Reeves, a molecular geneticist at Germany's Max Planck Institute.

Key West resident Marilyn Smith wasn't persuaded after Oxitec's presentation at a public meeting. She says neither disease has had a major outbreak yet in Florida, so "why are we being used as the experiment, the guinea pigs, just to see what happens?"





# A murder at the edge of the world takes 'Fortitude' to crack

FRAZIER MOORE

AP Television Writer

**NEW YORK (AP)** — A sick child. Buried treasure. A bit of wiggle room in honoring wedding vows. An all-important tourist project suddenly imperiled. Plus polar bears that outnumber humans, which means everyone (kids included) totes a rifle just in case.

That's about the size of it in tiny Fortitude, population 713.

Oh, there's also the weather. Fortitude is poised near the Arctic Circle north of Canada, on an island in the harsh embrace of ice, snow, frigid waters and glaciers that help make it (as the locals like to say) "the one place on Earth where we are guaranteed a quiet life."

Quiet, that is, until a brutal murder (perhaps this crime-free burg's first homicide) shatters the peace of an otherworldly refuge where — get this — it's against the law for anyone to die. And for good reason, as befits a place that functions by its own set of rules.

The killing casts suspicion on any number of the town's citizens in "Fortitude," a 12-hour psychological thriller that kicks off with a two-hour premiere Thursday at 10 p.m. EST on Pivot. The network's first original scripted drama, it stars Stanley Tucci ("The Lovely Bones," "The Hunger Games"), Richard Dormer ("Game of Thrones"), Michael Gambon ("The King's Speech" and the "Harry Potter" films) and Sofie Grabol (star of the original Danish version of "The Killing") among its array of international players. The saga would be plenty engrossing for how it entangles so many characters in a multi-strand whodunit.

But the setting (a character itself) takes the series to another dimension with a unique look and feel. Gorgeously filmed in eastern Iceland, "Fortitude" overwhelms the screen as vast, wild, exhilarating. Nature



This image released by Pivot shows Michael Gambon as Henry Tyson in a scene from "Fortitude."

Associated Press

shares top billing in this drama, or should.

The premiere episode provides a leisurely introduction to the town's residents, setting the stage for the carnage to come. Then the investigation gets cooking with the arrival of DCI Eugene Morton (Tucci), a London-based detective who has flown in to contribute his forensic skills. Morton immediately clashes with Sheriff Dan Andersen (Dormer), whose considerable pride prompts him to freeze out this intruder, or try to, even though he has no experience with murder cases. Of course, he may be a party to the crime. Like so many in this town, Andersen knows more than he's letting on or wants Morton to discover.

It is Morton who serves as the audience's surrogate penetrating this exotic world, a place most viewers will experience, transfixed, with awe and dread. And with so many questions! In flight to Fortitude, Morton voices one all-too-

obvious inquiry to a fellow passenger: "How do the people there enjoy the dark months? I mean: the isolation, the cold, the desolation, the loneliness!" The resident informs him

that, even at its darkest, the citizens routinely show fortitude, even against loneliness as they respond to a signal posted outside any home where a drop-in bedmate would be warmly

received.

"They look out for the wind chimes," she tells Morton.

"Okey-dokey," he manages to say. Wind chimes in Fortitude: just another unexpected clue.

## 'Jersey Belle' star Sullivan writing memoir, planned for fall release

**NEW YORK (AP)** — "Jersey Belle" star Jaime Primak Sullivan has more than one way of getting real. Sullivan has a deal with Touchstone for a "hilarious and frank fish-out-of-water memoir" about living in Birmingham, Alabama, that is scheduled for publication this fall. The book is called "Saved by the Belles: The Southern Education of a Jersey Girl," Touchstone announced Monday. Besides the "Jersey Belle" reality series, which airs on Bravo, Sullivan is also the creator of Cawfeetawk, an online program. Her memoir will be co-written with Eve Adamson. Touchstone is an imprint of Simon & Schuster.



In this July 14, 2014 file photo, Jaime Primak Sullivan attends the NBC 2014 Summer TCA held in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Associated Press



## John McCain gives thumbs up to 'American Sniper'

**WASHINGTON (AP)** — The chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee says critics of U.S. foreign policy are disparaging the movie, "American Sniper" and denigrating the memory of Chris Kyle, the U.S. serviceman depicted in the film.

In a statement on Monday, Sen. John McCain congratulated director Clint Eastwood and the cast and crew of the movie for honoring the life of Kyle whom he calls an American hero.

McCain says the film offers a compassionate portrayal of service members, their wartime experiences, the burdens they often bear upon returning home and untold sacrifices of their families.

To critics like Michael Moore, a documentary maker, the film glorifies violence.

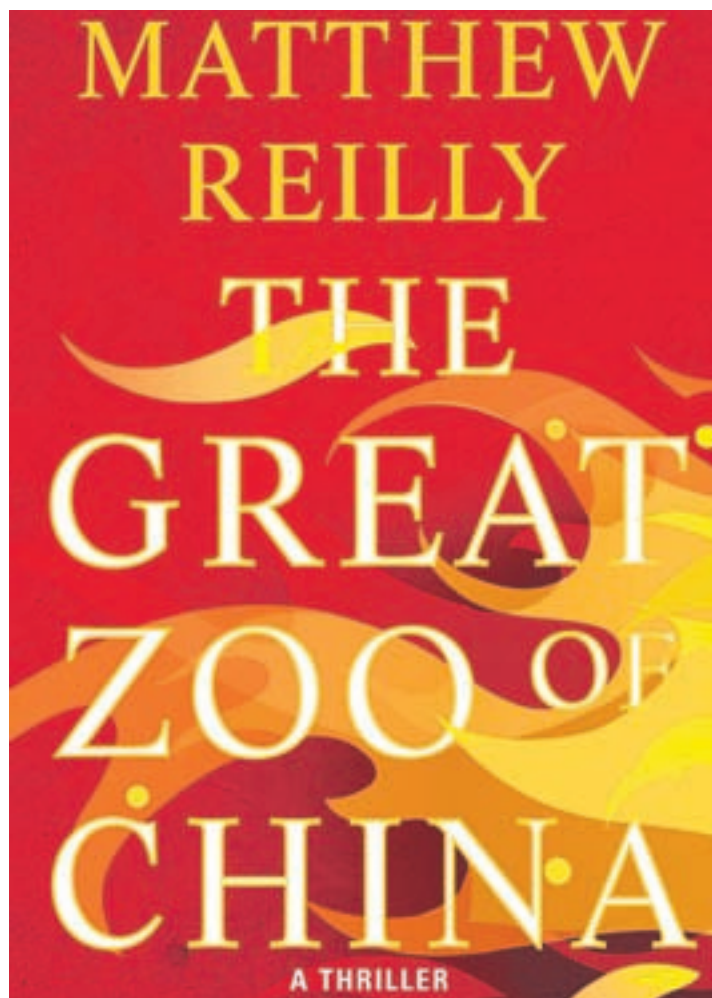


**In this Sept. 14, 1973 file photo, John McCain is greeted by President Richard Nixon in Washington, after McCain spent more than five years in a Vietnamese prisoner of war camp, know as the "Hanoi Hilton" before his release in March 1973.**

**Associated Press**

Moore, a staunch opponent of the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, tweeted about the movie: "Snipers aren't heroes, and invaders are worse." □

## Matthew Reilly writes action-packed 'Great Zoo of China'



**This book cover image released by Gallery Books shows "The Great Zoo of China," by Matthew Reilly.**

**Associated Press**

**JEFF AYERS**

**Associated Press**

Matthew Reilly takes elements from Michael Crichton's classic "Jurassic Park" and gives them a high fantasy spin in his latest action masterpiece, "The Great Zoo of China."

Reptile expert Dr. Cassandra Jane "CJ" Cameron is asked to visit a zoo that is soon to open in the middle of China. Staff members at the site are extremely secretive and provide few answers to her questions until Cameron and the others witness what animals are being kept inside the compound: dragons. The Chinese government has been keeping the discovery of dragon eggs hidden for over 40 years. Now that they have been able to create a place for the dragons to be seen by the general public, they are ready to unveil their existence. Once word spreads, officials believe the zoo will become the No. 1 tourist attraction in the world.

Cameron and the other dignitaries in her group explore the various sections of the zoo and learn about the technology used to keep visitors safe from the dragons, as well as the science and biology behind how these creatures can actually exist. They soon realize the dragons are superintelligent — and have a plan to escape.

Reilly has the ability to take objects such as garbage trucks and use them in extreme ways, creating action scenes that read majestically on the page. Most authors throw in guns and lots of shooting to create a frantic and thrilling scene, but Reilly can amp up the tension with just a glance from one of the creatures. The science and the setting of "The Great Zoo of China" make the scenario completely believable. The action is overwhelming, making the reader feel giddy as the pages fly. You will believe that dragons are real. □

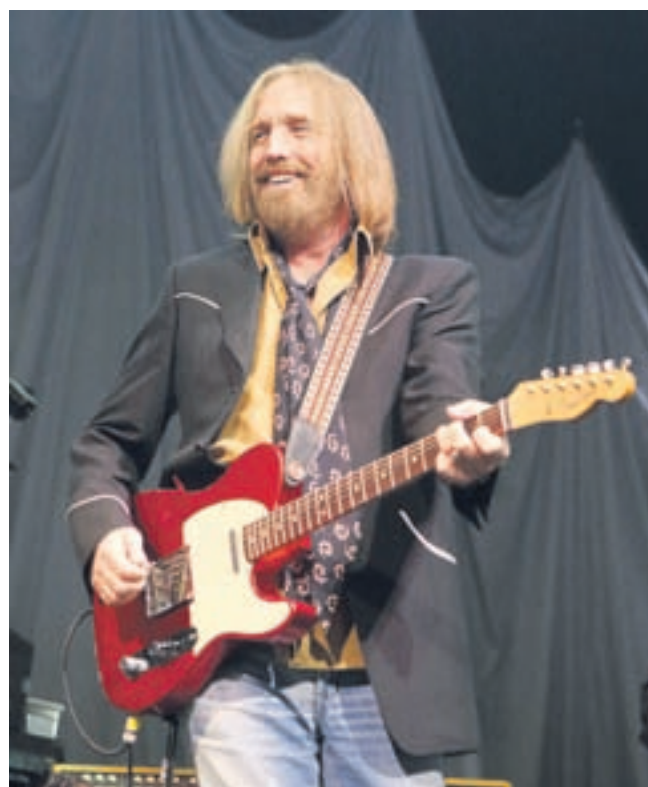
## Petty earns writing credit for Sam Smith's 'Stay With Me'

**NEW YORK (AP)** — Tom Petty has earned a writing credit on Sam Smith's megahit "Stay With Me" for its similarities to his song "I Won't Back Down."

Smith's representative said Monday the publishers of Petty's 1989 hit contacted the publishers of Smith's song, which was one of last year's biggest hits. Smith and "Stay With Me" writers James Napier and William Phillips say they agree their song is similar to Petty's song, written with Jeff Lynne. "Although the likeness was a complete coincidence, all involved came to an immediate and amicable agreement in which Tom Petty and Jeff Lynne are now credited as co-writers of 'Stay With Me' along with Sam Smith, James Napier and William Phillips," they said in a

statement. Petty's "I Won't Back Down" peaked at No. 12 on Billboard's Hot 100 chart. A representative for Petty declined to comment. "Stay With Me," Smith's debut song, has sold more than 3.5 million tracks and peaked at No. 2 on the Hot 100. The breakthrough British singer is nominated for six Grammy Awards at next month's show, including song of the year, an honor solely for the writers of a track. The Recording Academy's senior vice president of awards, Bill Freimuth, said Monday that Petty and Lynne would not be added to the nominations list for the song.

"Since Lynne and Petty did not do any new writing for this work, we are considering their original work to have been interpolated by Napier. □



**In this Sept. 15, 2014 file photo, Tom Petty performs in concert with Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers during their 'Hypnotic Eye Tour 2014' in Philadelphia.**

**Associated Press**





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